

AN ANALYSIS OF THE FAITH AT WORK MOVEMENT IN AMERICA

A PROFESSIONAL PROJECT

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the Faculty of the
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Doctor of Ministry

by
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ABSTRACT

The subject of this professional project is An Analysis of the Faith At Work Movement in America. This movement is primarily one that is dedicated to the renewal of the Church through greater lay participation. The movement is not totally in the hands of the laymen. Most of its significant leaders are clergymen.

The aim of the project is to understand the history of the movement, its language, and the dynamics that has caused it to receive a wide appeal among mainline Protestant churches. The project has also included a study of how it is possible for this movement to operate within different theological systems, even though there are often wide gaps theologically and liturgically among the churches involved.

The project's methodology included observation of conferences of the Faith at Work movement, research of writings, both books and magazines, and interviews with people who are connected with the movement. Also, the author conducted a 13-week class which used material titled "An Adventure In Faith" (Living the Adventure), written by Keith Miller and Bruce Larson. These authors were at one time very closely associated with the Faith at Work movement. Included in this project are some observations and evaluations by class members of the effectiveness of the Faith at Work movement approach. In addition are tapes made by some of the speakers in the movement, and a kit of booklets and

tapes which are aids in teaching. Thus, a combination of the theoretical and the practical has been incorporated in this project.

One of the main objectives of the project was to determine the basic theological assumptions of the movement. Since the people involved were from various churches and theologies, the author was not satisfied to explain the movement by merely calling it eclectic. What is called "relational theology" by the Faith at Work movement was analyzed to see if its ideas fit into some kind of theological system. (See Chapter VII)

The author believes that the Faith at Work movement has a significant role among the "middle-of-the-road" Protestant churches. The movement makes an effort to be in the middle of the road, so that there will be little controversy. It avoids rigid fundamentalism on the one hand, and extreme liberalism on the other. Its emphasis is on personal, warm, religious experiences. It is naive in not taking more seriously systemic evil. The movement's idea of conversion gives the impression of conversion away from the world rather than a commitment to the world. This is discussed in the project. The fact that the social radicals do not seem to find a home in the Faith at Work movement indicates that its "middle-of-the-road" position has rendered its social dimensions innocuous to them.

Although the Faith at Work movement emphasizes the "lay apostolate" concept, the author is not convinced that the movement is really in the hands of lay people. There is evidence that it is in the hands

of the clergy. The sources referred to by the author are clergy-based. The movement may be lay-oriented, but clergymen seem to be running the show.

The Faith at Work movement operates as an evangel within the institution of the church, with its many theological concepts. It is not a theological movement. It merely puts an emphasis on certain theological statements. It is a functional movement that can serve and help people in an uprooted society, where there is a need for personal warmth and "groupness." It is necessary to understand that the movement is an emphasis, not a theological system. One of its main emphases is that the healing of persons comes only through being vulnerable to other persons, and this must be achieved through trust groups. Thus, the Faith at Work movement finds itself within the more orthodox boundaries, particularly modern orthodoxy.

It is the belief of the author that the movement has a future within the institutional church; because it meets certain needs and wants of lay people. It assumes that most people want a religion that is warm and personal, and it speaks their language. However, the movement is in no way trying to find or be a substitute for the church. It is saying: "This is what the church should have been doing all along. It should be providing this personal warmth."

PREFACE

THE NATURE OF THE PROJECT

The nature of this project is two-fold. First there is the analysis that is drawn from the writings of Faith at Work enthusiasts and fellow travelers. The fellow travelers are those people who are sympathetic to the Faith at Work movement who are not actually in the movement itself. However, they reflect the same kind of emphasis.

The second part of the project is an actual group situation which the author has led in a thirteen-week experimentation. This group met for an hour and a half each week. The methods and insights of the Faith at Work movement were applied. Therefore, the project combines the theoretical and the practical. The Faith at Work theory was tested in actual situations. It is the author's conviction that true validation of the theory is authentic only if there is some way to have a playback from persons who are exposed to the Faith at Work methods. The results will be examined in a later chapter.

The author wanted not only to test the presuppositions of the Faith at Work movement in actual groups, but also to bring into his preaching some of the emphases he feels are very much needed in today's church.

Few books were available. While the Word Publishing Company of Waco, Texas, publishes Faith at Work material, the author has found a dearth of relevant writings that will assist in understanding and evalu-

ating the Faith at Work movement in America. Therefore he has had to look to other authors who were sympathetic to the movement, in order to gather the material needed for the project.

The Faith at Work movement publishes a monthly magazine which has aided in understanding what the objectives of the movement are. However, much of this material is very superficial. There was only one writer who seemed able to undergird the movement with any theological sophistication. This writer was Elton Trueblood who feels no one has attempted a serious intellectual evaluation of the movement. The author has had to research various periodicals in an attempt to learn about the Faith at Work emphasis.

The time spent in group work included not only class hours and the necessary preparation, but also (as a result of the class), many hours of personal counseling with individuals in the group. The personal counseling provided some clear insights into how the Faith at Work movement affects individuals.

Another resource was on-the-spot observation of Faith at Work conferences. In particular, in 1974 there was a large conference in Anaheim, California where many of the Faith at Work people were involved, and in which the author was a participant. Understanding of the vitality and the comradeship that exists in those who are a part of it, was greatly increased.

The nature of this project is, therefore, two-fold in the sense of researching the written material available, and bringing it into prac-

tical application through groups, personal counseling, and preaching. The author discovered in doing this project, that rather than it being only an isolated academic event for him, it has fit in very well with his active ministry. The feeling he has in writing this project is that it is not just a book research, but also a living experience. This has brought the author a sense of satisfaction, because he has some question about the value of the parish minister doing research without testing the research among the people he serves. This project has been carried out in an actual parish situation in a very large church, involving many people, the staff of the church, and groups within the church. The author feels this will better reflect the strengths and the weaknesses of the movement rather than just a personal evaluation of written material. He has tried to combine the theory and the practice to get a clearer understanding of the Faith at Work movement in America.

Submitted with this project will be a study guide and the accompanying books for use in group projects. Also, tapes that are used in the groups that include the verbal guidance of Keith Miller and Bruce Larson will be provided. These books and tapes will be available to all ministers and students who would like to test them before deciding on using them.

Other tapes of the platform speaking of Miller and Larson at Faith at Work conferences will be provided. These will give some insight into their style and method. The project, then, combines what is written, what is observed, and actual material of study guides and tapes.

CHAPTER I

HISTORY AND PURPOSE OF THE FAITH AT WORK MOVEMENT

The key person to give incentive to the Faith at Work movement was the Reverend Sam Shoemaker. He brought to the church a basic emphasis of commitment, deep sharing, and guidance. The commitment was to God through Jesus Christ, and to the community of Faith. This relationship to the people of God involved deep sharing, including confession and openness at all levels. It was felt that through these means, guidance could be realized in terms of specific action in one's personal life. The author feels it should be made clear (and this will be a theme running throughout this project) that this response is not so much understood as action in a social scene, as action in terms of one's own personal relationships.

The Faith at Work movement actually came into being when this young rector, Sam Shoemaker, came to New York City's Calvary Episcopal Church. Sam Shoemaker had an incisive way of clarifying the issues of faith, of helping all kinds of people to see the relevance of faith to their daily lives, and of urging them to put their lives under new management. His ministry was so attractive that men from everywhere came to hear him, and after their lives had been changed, he urged those who had life-changing experiences to begin to talk about them. Every Thursday evening in the Great Hall there would be an informal meeting where

laymen shared their spiritual discoveries.

They began to call the meetings "Faith That Works", and this is the precise emphasis. Sam Shoemaker deplored what he called "disembodied truth." When someone became theoretical, he would ask, "How does it work for you?" He would challenge ordinary people to the experiment of turning their lives over to Christ and seeing what he would do with them.

Sam Shoemaker was one of the first ministers in America to bring people together in small groups in a natural fashion, long before the use of small groups was popular in churches. It might well be noted that Alcoholics Anonymous was born and nurtured in this spiritual ferment. Bill Wilson, the father of A.A., was converted at Calvary Church. Sam Shoemaker put Bill Wilson in a small group where he discovered the power of supportive fellowship. When Bill began applying the principles to alcoholics, he and his rector together wrote the twelve steps which have since proved to be the royal road to recovery for hundreds of thousands of men and women.

Some people refer to the Faith at Work style as "everyman's A.A." It is a fellowship of sinners in support for those who have problems. Sam Shoemaker used to say, "Everyone either has a problem, is a problem, or is married to one."¹ People of all kinds were drawn to the

¹The Faith at Work Story (Columbia, Md: Faith at Work, 1974), p.4.

meetings in Great Hall, including Gert Behanna, the socialite who had recently been converted from alcoholism; Ellis Van Ripper, the labor leader; Grace Lumpkin, the former communist; Walston and Sadie Young, the Redcap who made Grand Central Station his cathedral; Eugenia Price, the radio script writer. Because of their witness, Laymen's Sunday was introduced into America's churches.

The first magazine was called "The Evangel," which began to carry stories of these Christian experiences after Sam Shoemaker moved on to Calvary Episcopal Church in Pittsburgh in the 1950's. The magazine later took the name "Faith at Work," and the fellowship continued to expand. In 1958, Irving Harris invited Bruce Larson to leave an Illinois pastorate and join him as Field Representative of "Faith at Work" magazine. From Bruce Larson's efforts during his fourteen years of creative leadership, came a widespread, supportive fellowship which now reaches from east to west, from north to south, and into Canada and several other foreign countries.

Expansion came rapidly. Teams of people came together to hold conferences where both clergy and laity could meet as human beings who needed the grace of God. They teamed up to visit churches where they were invited to share their Christian witness. The "Faith at Work" magazine moved to Waco, Texas, where Word Books, Inc., became its publisher. The circulation grew, and through this magazine, a new audience developed.

During this stage, the Faith at Work ministry was the enlarging

of the concept of the lay apostolate.² In the early Faith at Work years, the apostolate seemed to be limited to capable conference leaders and strong personalities who made up a given team. A person who was in need of counsel would seek out such leaders and team members on the unspoken assumption that through this kind of charismatic leadership, the Holy Spirit was particularly able to provide help.

During the early 1960's there developed what was called the field associates, a small group who met with a trained leader after a large meeting. Conference participants were divided into small groups, or "talk-it-over" groups, to meet in assigned rooms under the direction of carefully chosen, trusted leaders. The Faith at Work movement had not yet been opened to women as leaders; so all leaders were males. The training of these talk-it-over group leaders and the logistics involved in dividing the conference participants into groups no larger than twelve, were matters given much attention.

There was a further stage of development that had its beginning in the New York City Faith at Work Conference of 1968, which provided an alternative to the talk-it-over group approach. This was a group-of-four approach in which all the participants in the small group were responsible for the other members of their particular group. The apostolate concept was enlarged to its maximum. No longer limited to platform leadership and trained leaders, all participants in the conference were given an oppor-

²Ralph Osborne, White Paper, "Summary of Faith at Work History", prepared for the Faith at Work Staff, January 12, 1973, p. 2.

tunity to minister to the needs of people. This was a real, practical application of the priesthood of all believers. The emphasis of the new approach to group process was that the treasure of ministry is in all people.

This, then, enlarged the lay apostolate to include all the people of God, and removed the conference leadership role from that of a directing ministry to that of an enabling ministry of all the people. Witnesses changed from success stories to vulnerability and the freedom to speak of risking and failing. The author thinks this latter phrase must be remembered as a key concept in the Faith at Work movement. The phrase "vulnerability and the freedom to speak of risking and failing" became one of the most important concepts. It had tremendous appeal.

This emphasis is one that still permeates the whole movement. While there are some large conferences where charismatic leaders speak and obviously are attractive figures, this is not the main emphasis. In fact, the Faith at Work people say they are not looking to a star-studded platform leadership, nor to well-trained group leaders, as a primary source of effective ministry. They believe that the Holy Spirit is operative in all God's people, trained and untrained alike. However, they do have leadership training institutes that provide for small family groups where primary ministers are used. Institute leadership training is for the purpose of making possible effective ministry both in the groups in the institute itself, and by individuals upon their

return home.

During this time, a profound development of the understanding of the nature of the ministry of the lay apostolate was taking place. The people involved in the movement began to see the ministry more in terms of being than of doing. Their life style became a way of describing a concept of being, in what they called "full relationships." Through these relationships, the meaning of life was better understood, rather than being merely conceptualized.

Commitment in life changing as had been emphasized in an earlier stage, was not yet seen in the dynamic of relationships. Relevance, which had been interpreted in terms of one's vocation, was now seen as a responsible relationship to the whole world scene; and involvement was the nature of such a responsive relationship. From these two basic relationships to God and to the world, came the phrase "a two-legged gospel."³

One other development came about during this time. While in the early years of dependence upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit meant that planning and preparation be minimal, spontaneity was a true mark of the Spirit's operation. Strategizing was therefore suspect. But at this later stage of development, the Faith at Work people felt that the Spirit's guidance can provide the function and also the planning stages

³Ibid., p. 5.

of an event.

Therefore the Faith at Work movement moved into a further stage of development. It seems to the author that it was not so much a searching for Biblical and theological rootage to determine orthodoxy for the group, but rather to comprehend what God is doing among the people.

The purpose of the movement is based on this particular platform: the belief that God changes lives and he changes them through the ministry of other persons. They moved from charismatic leadership (which was usually clergy) to trained "talk-it-over group leaders" (which were usually clergy and male lay people) to leaders that are usually female, and then to openness to include all people who have had an experience to share.

As the author understands the purpose of the Faith at Work movement, it is in a lay apostolate. It seems clear to the writer that there was no great interest in any theological growth or in any shifting of the orthodox faith. This will be discussed in a later chapter. The author of the White Paper, Ralph Osborne, writes: "We write our theology in ink, but we write our strategies in pencil because these will always be changing for us."⁴

The Faith at Work movement reminds us that nothing crucial has ever happened in the history of the church apart from small groups of people deeply committed to Christ and to each other. The model for today is geese rather than gulls. Writing in a recent issue of "Faith at

⁴Ibid., p. 6.

Work" magazine, Ralph Sturdy tells how he learned from a friend that geese can fly 71 per cent farther in formation than they can alone. The action of the wings of one goose creates an uplift which makes it easier for the goose that follows. What we learn from this is that strength can be found in groups that cannot be found in individuals alone.

In other words, we have discovered that when we are dealing with life in real situations, unity happens as a natural by-product. When we deal only with abstract concepts and doctrinal truths apart from life, we will invariably separate and divide over our definitions. Only in the realm of experience can we be one together. Therefore, the Faith at Work people feel they are providing a unity.⁵

A casual reading of the New Testament reveals the importance of a ministry for all who claim Christ as Lord. The professional priesthood seldom made the scene at all; and if they did, they often seemed to be on the wrong team. Jesus deliberately entrusted the message of the gospel in the ministry of reconciliation to the hands of the common people. They had heard unbelievably good news about acceptance and forgiveness and fresh beginnings; and they were impatient to share it wherever they went. Lay people can create a context of caring and wholeness

⁵Ralph Osborne, "The Unique Opportunity of Faith at Work" (paper read at the Faith at Work Conference, Canada, Nov. 29, 1972).

in which the healing processes function very effectively.

This idea is beginning to have some support from the psychiatric profession. Its approach to therapy now frequently involves caring laymen and a concerned neighborhood as a setting in which mental and emotional healing can best happen. The Faith at Work movement is putting its whole weight on the premise that any man or woman of faith can be an effective minister to the needs of people. They are trying to demonstrate that the laymen's ministry is precisely what the church is all about, and anything less will ultimately be inadequate. However, the Faith at Work movement does not minimize the clergyman's role. It is suggesting that the clergyman may have his role changed. He may come into a different kind of ministry than is now assigned to him. He is needed to train, to equip, to teach, to enable key laymen to then reproduce that style of ministry in others.

⁶Ibid., p. 8

CHAPTER II

THE LANGUAGE OF THE FAITH AT WORK MOVEMENT

When we speak of the language of the Faith at Work movement, it is fair to say that the effort has been to contemporize. The Faith at Work people do not believe that they should be restricted to the language of theology or tradition.

Keith Miller makes the point that we are communicating with people outside the Christian community. We do not realize how unreal our religious language and expressions are. He faults the church because often the traditional language is different from the sounds of everyday life. To the uninitiated, this language seems pious and phony. Miller makes his point by saying that very few people he knows fight or make love in King James English. Most of the men and women he counsels have problems of anxieties and doubts which do not have a religious sound. He says in his own life when he screams silently at night in his loneliness or frustration, he does not do it in the language of the liturgy or systematic theology.

Bruce Larson concurs on this point and says that we must remember that the original Greek of the New Testament was the language of the street, not the language of the scholars. It could be said that most language of the New Testament is the average man's language, but still highly theological. It could hardly be called the language of

the street, for it is unclear what the "language of the street" really is. Miller is almost too obvious when he says Elizabethan English, the language of the King James Bible, is not the language that Americans use today. This is a cliché and needs further examination. The truths of the Bible are much greater than any attempt in the past or present to describe them. Therefore, we must learn to use the language of our day and to speak about eternal truths even as Jesus.¹

Thus, the Faith at Work people are not reluctant to speak their faith in the language of today. And while traditional theology is a base in which Miller and Larson work, they feel it is their obligation to reinterpret this traditional faith in the most effective language.

The special prayer language we use is a hand-me-down from the days of Shakespeare, King James, and Queen Elizabeth I, via the authorized version of the Bible and the Anglican Prayer Book. At that time, it was customary to use the words "thee" and "thou" to indicate a neighbor and friend. "You" and "yours" were reserved for royalty. The King James version of the Bible, therefore, refers to God in pronouns normally used familiarly for a friend or companion, not in terms customary in the king's court. Over the years, perhaps reflecting democratic influences, the pronouns of royalty became the pronouns of every person, so that we now use "you" and "yours" in daily conversation.

¹Bruce Larson, Ask Me To Dance (Waco, Tx: Word Books, 1972), p. 63.

The printed English Bible authorized in the 17th century reflected the old usage. "Thee" and "thou" were retained as pronouns referring to the Almighty alone, and this influence is reflected in the extemporaneous prayers of today. Research on the use of outmoded language was conducted in a second grade church school class where it was discovered that the words "thee" and "thou" were utterly without meaning to the youngsters. The pastor of the church determined that never again would he use these foreign words in public prayer. He wanted to use terms that even the youngest worshippers in the congregation could find meaningful.

Bruce Larson and Ralph Osborne, the authors of the book, The Emerging Church, write of observing a large gathering of Methodist laymen, full of vitality and seeming to be authentic representatives of the growing lay apostolate in our day. But they write that all the hymns sung were from a bygone era, many of them written by Charles Wesley. They point out that in his day, Charles Wesley was writing contemporary hymns, and the hymns he wrote were meaningful to the bulk of the people who sang them. In fact, they were new and refreshing.

The Wesleys expressed themselves in words and forms that were meaningful to the middle and lower classes of people of their time. The many generations following them have sanctified their words, and there is doubt that these words effectively communicate now. Larson and Osborne say if Charles Wesley were to return today, he would doubt-

less scrap his old songs and write new ones. John Wesley probably would not hold camp meetings. Rather, he would find new ways to evangelize, recruit, and teach. Therefore, to be 20th century Christians, we ought not copy the language of the Wesleys, but we ought to try to capture the spirit and the style of their spiritual adventure. Larson and Osborne say the new church may follow General Booth of the Salvation Army more closely than Charles Wesley in the matter of hymnology. Booth put new words to singable, popular tunes. Because the melodies were familiar, the congregations could sing songs that came out of life experiences of the immediate past. The problem with new words is that they do not stay new. It can be observed that the Salvation Army is absolute in archaism. What was once revolutionary, today is "quaint."

The author has some difficulty with this analysis of hymnology. It seems to say that anything old is of no value. It is doubtful that contemporary language is the only kind of language able to communicate. Certainly the classic language of the Elizabethan period and the language of Charles Wesley's period can communicate also. The author lives in San Diego where there is an excellent Shakespearian theater. When he attends this theater, he does not expect Shakespeare to be interpreted in modern language. But the communication is there. In fact, Shakespeare would be weakened in his impact if his language were brought into a contemporary mold. Just as we believe in classical music, there is a case for classical language. The Faith at Work movement is naive in assuming that language always has to be contemporized to be meaning-

ful. Every minister knows that in the marriage ceremony the traditional form of speaking is often used. It has a structure, form, and beauty that contemporary language does not offer. It communicates on a different level.

The authors of The Emerging Church are correct when they say most of our communication should be contemporary. What is meant by contemporary is not altogether clear. There is a contemporary scholarly language, and a contemporary religious language. "Contemporary" does not necessarily mean "street language." Larson and Osborne have not clarified what they mean by the words "contemporary language." The author interprets them to mean language that is understood by most people. This can be illustrated by an experience of John Wesley. On one occasion he heard some people on the street using strong, vivid language. He stopped a preacher friend who was passing by and asked him to listen to the people in order to learn how to preach.

The author would not suggest giving a sermon in classical language. But to totally remove the language now used from the whole liturgical and worship scene, seems to diminish, and even corrupt, some kinds of liturgy in worship. "Thee" and "thou" seem to be very appropriate on certain occasions. It is not the task of the minister to bring all language to a level in order that he may be completely understood. Frequently the minister should bring the lay people to an understanding of the language that is used. This is part of his teaching

function.

The author believes the Faith at Work movement is correct in saying they feel an obligation to reinterpret the traditional faith in language people can understand. Carl Michalson speaks of hermeneutics as language. He says, "Hermeneutics is not simply exegesis, but the bringing of the message. It is language as presentation that is made present by interpretation. Understanding of a speech in the language of history is communication, not as translation, but as communion, and through language, the possibility of presence is created."² He goes on to say, "Faith which is historical and also meaningful, cannot exist at the level of representational language, for history, like fine arts, is not a representational language, but a presentational language. It contains reality, and describes."³ Michalson also points out that natural language strives toward freedom from historical language, and that language is often used not as simply mirroring of reality, but as an active reconstruction of it.⁴ This language comes out of a dramatic personal participation in reality.

Miller and Larson, who follow the spirit of the Faith at Work movement, move from historical language to presentational language. Michalson quotes Ernst Fuchs and Gerhard Ebeling: "...for Ebeling's speech is not an object one analyzes, but an event through which one

²Carl Michalson, The Rationality of Faith (Waco, Tx: Word Books, 1964), p. 87.

³Ibid., p. 7.

⁴Ibid., p. 8.

understands, so therefore the word of God is not a language in detachment from God, but the very coming of God himself."⁵ Though Miller and Larson are not consciously explicit about the use of language and its power, there is evidence in their style of speaking that language does create the event where God can come to man. The speech event is a method of speaking in which speech does not simply describe an event which has already happened, but it creates an event. Michalson says, "In the Old Testament the speech event is not a word given once-upon-a-time to prophets in the past, which the prophets therefore declare to us. It is a word which, when repeated, creates our present spirit."⁶

The serious regard for language as a way of communicating an historical event in the present is very important in the Faith at Work movement. The freedom from traditional language provides a way in which the event can be made real. Martin Luther believed his time had a better understanding of the Gospel than did the fathers of the church, chiefly because of advances that had been made in language study. Michalson says, "Biblical language is historically accurate not when it accurately reflects a situation in the past, but when it does for the present what it did for the past."⁷

⁵Ibid., p. 91.

⁶Ibid., p. 92.

⁷Ibid., p. 94.

The author thinks this is what Larson and Miller are getting at--language that is meaningful and presents the event, but does not deny the historical truth. So to understand the Faith at Work movement, we must see the importance of traditional theology and non-traditional language.

It was the author's opportunity to attend a Faith at Work conference and to observe the language that was used. There were no particular or special words or theological phrases used. The most impressive thing was that the man on the street could come into these meetings, and with no background in theology or religion, could clearly understand what was said. This is the goal of the Faith at Work movement. Everyone knew he was in a secular world where secular language was being used, and everyone realized that religious language is not the language of the street. Therefore, the way to communicate is to understand this difference. With the exception of one speech, there were no difficult phrases where one had to know theological jargon, or even to have Biblical knowledge, in order to understand what was being said.

The author feels this approach takes away some of the arrogance of the religious professional. Many who have been trained in theology and the Bible and thus learn special terms, frequently use words with meaning special and specific only to them, but which have no meaning to the congregation. In preaching, this is especially significant. Bishop Gerald Kennedy, one of the foremost preachers of this country, never

used language that anyone with a Junior High School education could not understand. It wasn't that he did not know the phrases of the theological jargon. He chose not to use them, because he realized they did not communicate.⁸

It seems clear that when we examine the Faith at Work movement, we must conclude there has been an effort to contemporize the language, religion, and tradition. An endeavor has been made to make its language the language of the street. While the author has a few reservations about the total application of this approach, this is a major contribution of the Faith at Work movement. When one uses special theological language, there is a separation between the laity and the ministry. The Faith at Work movement is aimed at exactly the opposite of this.

There is no reason why the minister should feel "above" the layman. The specialized education the minister has is not to be brought to the pulpit to prove his adequacy as a theologian or as a scholar. The purpose of speaking is communication. The Faith at Work people are saying, therefore, that we must use language every man can clearly understand. This is a very important part of their appeal; and while it may antagonize some sophisticates, it certainly has attracted a large mass of people who want the speaker to talk about God and Christ and

⁸It seems there are two issues: the traditional language of the liturgy (the language of laymen), and theological jargon. It is important that this division be understood.

the Bible in simple, straightforward language that is easily understood.

However, people are not satisfied with cliches and triviality. Because a preacher uses common language does not mean that he is effective. A good preacher is one who has something meaningful to say, and does it in the most understandable language for thoughtful people. There is a danger that large masses of people may be attracted by the preacher's reinforcement of their simple cliches and prejudices. Too often the minister responds to what the people expect and want to hear. He might feel a false assurance because of the large masses of people attracted. It may mean that the people are hearing what they like to hear at a level where they feel comfortable, even if there is no challenge to understand in greater depth.

The author thinks there is a danger of the clergyman dramatizing his own problems. Sometimes the clergyman's problems are not the real problems of most human beings. Another danger of this kind of openness is that some people become interested out of curiosity and this may have negative consequences. If some ministers were to openly reveal their problems by saying they were bored and empty and had nothing to offer, what would this do to a congregation? A minister should be open, but there must be a place where intimacy comes to an end. Dignity must be maintained, with the minister staying away from self-glorification in reverse. "His own experiences are of value to others only if they

transcend himself."⁹ The author will deal with this further in the last chapter.

⁹Quotation from Dr. Dieter Betz, School of Theology at Claremont, California.

CHAPTER III

METHOD AND STYLE--OPENNESS AND VULNERABILITY

The method and style of the Faith at Work movement are characterized in these two words: openness and vulnerability. The style breaks down the formalism peculiar to most established churches. Even architectural style of buildings is brought into question; for most church sanctuaries are not built for real fellowship, but for architectural beauty.

In New Testament times there was no theology that dealt with architecture, but there was an essential fellowship which worshipped the Lord. In their togetherness there was a face-to-face meeting with no stiff, liturgical order. "There were no rigid pews separating the brethren one from another; no false dignity forbade warm greetings among the faithful. There were no mimeographed or printed liturgies. What was normal and spontaneous was expressed. No stop watch determined the precise moment when worship began and ended."¹ The word that describes the worship and fellowship is "together."

For the church to be renewed, it has to have some opportunities for this kind of togetherness. In togetherness, there is a sense of

¹Bruce Larson and Ralph Osborne, The Emerging Church (Waco, Tx: Word Books, 1970), p. 83.

freedom of personal expression. The sermon itself must have this quality of personal expression. Keith Miller, who as a layman attended seminary, offers some evaluation of his own experience. He feels that seminaries are lacking in preparing persons for effective ministry because they are often too academic and too impersonal. He says, "In many seminaries, if not most, future ministers are told that it is bad taste, egotistical, and ineffective to speak personally in the sermon. I have heard ministers say in the pulpit, 'Please excuse the personal illustration' when they are about to enter their own sermon for a moment. I can't help adding that it is lucky God didn't feel that way about a personal illustration, or according to the Bible, we wouldn't have had Jesus Christ."²

The critics of this kind of openness state that they fear that vulnerability in preaching might cause a lack of respect for the minister. There is a fear that if the minister expresses a feeling of inadequacy or mentions this publicly, no one would be impressed with the listener's faith. This kind of fear of being vulnerable sifts through to the laymen until they, too, are not being honest about their own lives. The critics argue that this kind of honesty in communication would hurt the witness for Christ. Miller comments on this kind of repressive Christianity when he says, "For generations we Christians

²Keith Miller, The Becomers (Waco Tx: Word Books, 1973), p. 35.

were sometimes the most frustrated and lonely with our solitary self-doubts, fears, and conflicts."³

The method and style of the Faith at Work movement leans toward confession, not impression. In the secular world men strive to impress; in the Christian fellowship, one has the freedom to confess. In an emerging church, the honesty of confession can be provided in layman-to-layman encounters of various kinds, in small caring and sharing groups of all sorts, in clusters of people within the sanctuary during worship service, and in an extended "listening ministry" which will involve laymen and clergy as they participate in the priesthood of all believers.⁴

The traditional approach of religion, especially what carried over from the 19th century, stressed emphasis on a doctrinaire and a vertical exclusiveness to God. The new Christian is moving toward deeper and more honest personal relationships with people. It is the consensus of the Faith at Work people that this can happen only through a style of communication which emphasizes personal honesty and vulnerability.

Miller says that this may be repugnant and confusing to the objectively oriented pastor or seminary professor. The feeling is that

³Ibid., p. 83.

⁴Ibid., p. 71.

often the minister uses his material to protect himself from the congregation, rather than to open himself to the congregation. In the contemporary church, the minister often preaches doctrinally correct or socially relevant sermons, but these sermons are often constructed so that no one will see the minister's secret inner problems. Florence Allshorn, speaking of the people of St. Julian's community, found there is no peace, whatever kind of facade they put on, for people who somewhere inside themselves have a fear of being known. They must break through this fear, no matter what the cost, if they are going to have any message for this generation.⁵

The Faith at Work belief is that the unity and power of dynamic fellowship that should come in a church cannot be provided by clergy leadership alone. This unity and power are the fruits of inadequacies faced up to, shared vulnerably, and being transformed by the amazing working of God through other people in a caring situation. Miller gives his own witness: "My own experience indicates a personal healing and liberation have taken place among church members only when someone begins this process of personal openness."⁶

The method and style of the Faith at Work movement, then, is willingness to be vulnerable, one to the other. Paul, himself, was an

⁵Ibid., p. 40.

⁶Ibid., p. 25.

example of the kind of preaching that should be done when he speaks of his own weakness. He says "...for my power is made perfect in weakness" and he concludes by saying that he will continue to speak of his weakness, "...that the power of Christ may rest upon me."⁷ It is a strong conviction of the Faith at Work movement that when weakness is shared, the church becomes strong.⁸

It is clear to the author that there should be no distinction between the clergy and the laity in regard to what is demanded to bring about an honest togetherness. Faith at Work people do not believe there should be professional Christians through whom the rest of us live out our faith vicariously. Ministers must be as free to fail as the rest of the congregation. The congregation and the minister must struggle together in weakness and in strength. The minister must lead the way in this honest admission of failure. Then the emerging church will discover the healing power of confession.

The feeling that personal failure is not acceptable, prevalent in the church today, exists because most churches are still too judgmental toward sin, weakness, and inadequacies. This is a block to the free spirit moving within members of a congregation. The church's foremost stance must be an attitude of forgiveness, rather than one of judgment. What is unique about the Faith at Work movement is its demand

⁷II Corinthians 12:9.

⁸Keith Miller, The Becomers (Waco, Tx: Word Books, 1973), p. 39.

that the minister himself be drawn into this confessional time. Traditionally there has been a hierarchy within the church where the minister was considered above other people because of his ordination. There was an assumption that ethically and morally his standards were higher. But the emphasis of the Faith at Work movement is that everyone should be brought to the same level. If a thing is wrong, it is wrong for all people, both clergy and laity; if a thing is right, it is right for all people. All must enter into this open confession together.

One of the impressive things about Miller and Larson is their willingness to be open about their personal lives. The author has found this to be a very freeing experience. They were not preaching about what happened to someone else, but about what was happening to them. They were not relating someone else's experience, but the witness was coming through their own personalities.

The Faith at Work movement believes that, unless the minister has this vulnerability, he is putting himself in a certain kind of box. He is allowing others to characterize him as a person who does not have the same kind of frustrations and anxieties as the laymen. He is setting himself apart. Also, there is a concern about the possible damage to the mental health of the minister. Bruce Larson points out that if Jesus did not tell his disciples about the nature of his dilemmas and his own temptations, how could they have written about them? None of the disciples were with him in the wilderness, or at Gethsemane

where he sweated blood. Jesus must have told Peter, James, and John that he was troubled, fearful, and anxious. He must have told them something more about what happened even though it is not recorded, because they were all asleep during part of the action.⁹

The questions arise: Why is vulnerability so painful? Why are not more ministers willing to feel they are on the same level with the layman, and say, "We are all in the same boat" ? This applies to the laymen, also. Being vulnerable must be dealt with. One of the major blocks to this is the desire for approval; and approval comes by meeting the image others impose. In self-defense, persons begin to fit the roles expected to conform to some religious authority. What is needed is to find out and do God's will. In doing this, persons do not accept the images imposed upon them, but they deal with their actual selves, with all the conflicts, doubts, and insecurities involved.

Persons who are not willing to reveal their real selves, must reveal something else. The reason many persons want to reveal something other than who they really are, is because they feel deeply the need for approval. Miller calls this kind of person an "approvalholic." This is someone who is hooked on constant, favorable attention and approval, instead of on alcohol. If ministers and other Christians are overly concerned about what people think of them, they will never be

⁹Keith Miller, a paper read at The Festival of Hope Conference, Anaheim, California, 1972, p. 12.

able to be vulnerable. At the heart of the refusal to be open and vulnerable is a pride that mitigates the deepening of one's spiritual life. If one refuses to say he has needs, he will not find help. If one assumes the image he is projecting is acceptable, then he is not dealing with his real life.

Bruce Larson uses an illustration of a layman who could not accept openness if it came from a clergyman. He tells of the time when he stopped at a gas station to ask directions. He said:¹⁰

I was looking for a meeting of young people where I was to lead a workshop. I bought some gas, and as I gave the attendant my credit card, I said, "I'm lost." Noticing that my credit card was marked Reverend, he smilingly said, "Ah, I see you're a clergyman, so you're not really lost like most of us." "Oh, but I am," I replied. "Being a clergyman doesn't mean you can't be lost in some of the most basic areas of life. It just means you ought to know where to go for help." The man shook his head. He would not, and could not, believe that a clergyman could be as lost as he was.

Too many times the laymen impose unreal images upon ministers. They live their religious lives through the minister by proxy. They want to see the minister as one who is above temptation. When the minister gets caught in this imagery of perfection, he does a disservice to himself and a disservice to the laymen, also. It may come as a shock to many laymen that ministers are in the same human situation as they. Ministers, too, have sexual desires, lusts, and temptations to greed. The best relationship between the minister and the layman is

¹⁰ Bruce Larson, Ask Me To Dance (Waco, Tx: Word Books, 1972), p. 43.

based on the attitude of struggling together. This means being willing to be vulnerable and to find the resources that will strengthen and give power.

Larson writes further about the idea of setting the minister off as one who is always correct and right. He mentions a greeting card which he had recently received:

May you always be young and glad;
And even if it's Sunday, may you be wrong,
For when men are always right,
They are no longer young.

Rigidity and defensiveness are the things that block out honest relatedness. Faith at Work people believe that true relatedness comes when the minister breaks down all barriers between himself and his people.

This certainly would result in forcing many ministers to alter their style of preaching. As the author said, Larson and Miller are willing to have their lives exposed in front of the congregation. The author hoped that he, too, could have the courage to expose his life and his feelings. The psychology of this exposure is that if the minister is willing to let the congregation know him, maybe they will be willing to let him know them. Sidney Jourard says in The Transparent Self, "The individual must cooperate in making himself known. In short, man must consent, if he would know himself; he must want to tell us. If he doesn't wish to tell us, we can torture him, browbeat him, tempt him, even make incisive psychoanalytical guesses, but unless he wishes to

make himself known, we will, of course, never know."¹¹ This is a very important aspect of the style of preaching demonstrated by Larson and Miller. It is to present oneself in such a way that listeners want to make themselves known, and in making themselves known to others and to God, there is provided a way to change.

Paul Tournier makes the same point. He says that in his counseling with patients, if he maintains a professional attitude toward them, therapy does not take place. He says, "When I show a patient where I've failed and where I've felt miserable, then more often therapy takes place."¹² Miller and Larson believe that this applies also to the pulpit. When the minister himself, dares to be vulnerable, healing and therapy are more likely to take place in the lives of the hearers.

Miller illustrates this point by a personal story. He tells of a man who came to him with a problem, and it was difficult to determine what was bothering him. But in his counseling, when the man did reveal what he had been hiding for so long, Miller in turn said:¹³

I have experienced the same kind of feelings this very same day you are talking about. I thought he would walk out of my office in disgust, but instead he just looked at me in disbelief and said, "Are

¹¹Sidney M. Jourard, The Transparent Self (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1964), p. 83.

¹²Miller, p. 44.

¹³Ibid., p. 11.

you serious?" Then I really wished I had not told him. When I nodded my head, he began to weep and said, "Oh, thank you. If you've got this problem, and are able to keep going as a committed Christian, maybe I can. I have been so alone." I remember having been very surprised at his reaction in realizing that he had not primarily wanted an answer man. He had wanted someone to be with him in his problem. And my identification with him as a sinner was a kind of answer from his perspective--since we were side by side before God and needed grace and forgiveness.

The Faith at Work movement feels strongly that unless the church becomes a community of openness, vulnerability, and confession, people will find these things in other places. Bruce Larson has said that the neighborhood bar is often a substitute for the church. It is an imitation of communion, dispensing liquor instead of grace, escape rather than reality. It is permissive, accepting, and inclusive of fellowship. It is unshockable, and it is democratic. You can tell people secrets and they usually don't tell others. The bar flourishes not because most people are alcoholics, but because God has put into the human heart the desire to know and be known, to love and be loved, and so many seek this assurance at the price of a few beers.¹⁴

The Faith at Work movement feels that this style of ministry, where there is a fellowship of openness and vulnerability, is essential for any vitality in the church. If this is the style of fellowship that is created, it brings on a different style of preaching. This kind of preaching might be described as a "gut-level" style. While the word

¹⁴Bruce Larson, Dare To Live Now (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1965), p. 35.

"vulnerability" has been used, the word "transparency" might also be used. Larson quotes an anonymous psychotherapist as saying that professional psychiatrists who become effective, are those whose lives are transparent to their patients. Then he adds sadly, "We don't know how to put this quality of openness and transparency into people who come for training."¹⁵

The ministry of Larson and Miller is characterized by the willingness to risk themselves, the willingness to be exposed, the willingness to dig out of their own experiences something unacceptable. They are willing to put themselves down in an effort to create identification. In this style of preaching, there is no distance between the pulpit and the pew. In this style there is no lofty place for the preacher. There is no fleeing to a professional image.

The minister must see himself as similar to the average layman, with all the pain, the hurts, and the threats they have. In this style of vulnerability and openness, all pomposity is done away with. All stuffed-shirtedness must be denied. As he stands before his congregation, he is a human with no denial of all the temptations that are peculiar to the human race. The minister communicates to the congregation that he has not "arrived"; he is not the example. The minister's task is mainly to point to the resources of grace that can aid a man and

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 36.

strengthen his life. In this style of ministry, the clergyman is obligated not only to share his problems with the congregation, but also to celebrate his joys and victories as he personally experiences them. The author has a strong feeling that for a vital church where people's needs are met, this style of preaching is the style of the future. The Gospel is more than the ups and down of one's personal life. The pilgrimage of any soul is worth talking about, but if it ends there, the journey stops.

CHAPTER IV

OPTIMISM FOR PERSONAL CHANGE AND GROWTH

One quality that marks the Faith at Work movement is a spirit of optimism. This optimism creates a very positive approach. There has been a growing feeling for many years that in the established church we have been talking about renewal in terms of analyzing where the church has failed and pointing out all its weaknesses, and even feeling the institution is not worthy of support. While the Faith at Work movement has some serious questions about the institution of the church, it is optimistic about its future. This optimism is based not on the institution as it is, but in the changes possible in individual lives, which in turn, will change the institution. This will be dealt with further in a later chapter. The author thinks one of the more significant things the Faith at Work movement is saying is that institutions do not change people, but that people change institutions.

In the writings analyzed by the author, very little is said about changing organizational structures as a means to renewal. Organizational structures will be changed only when people are changed. Sometimes through an almost naive optimism, the notion emerges that the changing of people is the answer to most institutional problems. The author believes that institutions, systems, and social structures do shape and change people's lives. Sometimes these structures are so overpowering

that the individual seems helpless in the face of them. This is the mood of many laymen in our present day. Political and socio-economic structures are so massive that one feels helpless.

What the Faith at Work movement has done is to recognize that the average person feels powerless in the face of these structures. Its optimism is based not in relation to changing structures themselves, but in relation to people, who can be changed. While a person feels helpless in changing massive institutions, he feels he can change his own life. Thus, the Faith at Work movement has been very strong in putting personal change before social change.

This idea needs to be questioned, but there is no doubt an overpowering optimism lies in the power of the individual. The appeal of the Faith at Work movement to the layman is that he need not feel powerless. He can change, and as a changed person, he is an agent of change. He is no longer the victim of structures and institutions. There arises, then, a new kind of confidence that the quality of his life will affect the organization and the culture within which he lives. So it cannot be over-emphasized that personal change comes before social change.

It is clear that the Faith at Work's appeal is to the personal. There has hardly been any chapter or article the author has researched for this study that has dealt at length with any of the deep social problems of our age. Articles dealing with social aspects have been very few in relation to the many that have spoken only of personal needs.

This imbalance will be dealt with in the chapter on "Institutional Emphasis--Piety or Activism."

This emphasis on personal change and great optimism that people can change implies that people need to change. The evils in our society are the result of the evil in man. The point is made that the destructive element in our society comes because of personal self-hatred. Problems of pollution in the atmosphere, soil and water, are evidence of too much self-centeredness. The lack of caring for one's neighbor and rampant selfishness at all levels of society hasten the day when the human race will have accomplished its own extinction. The Faith at Work movement believes that the ultimate in selfishness is rooted in self-hatred on a colossal scale.

Larson and Osborne speak of this self-hatred that is most obvious in our large cities. The casual acceptance of physical and moral filth, the power struggle, the misuse of public funds, and the extremely pessimistic attitude that people have in dealing with social ills are all signs of our need for radical change as persons. They observe that persons involved in social change too often think in terms of policies, structures, organizations, while they, themselves, are not compassionate persons who exemplify the qualities of love our society needs. In words supposedly attributed to William Penn, we must be changed men ourselves before we set out to change others. And Elton Trueblood has written:

The demand for our time will be new men for our time. The truly contemporary man who is a whole man will be concerned about the ov-

ercoming of war, poverty, and racial discrimination, but if he permits these to be his only objects of concern, they will become more elusive than they are. Only by a conscious and continuing nurture of his inner life can any man avoid the tragedy of killing the thing he loves. The man who supposes he has no time to pray or to reflect, because the social tasks are numerous and urgent, will soon find that he has become fundamentally unproductive, because he will have separated his life from its roots. It will not then be surprising if in his promotion of what seems to him to be a good cause, he becomes bitter in his condemnation of others. Without the concurrent cultivation of the inner life, and the outer life, it is almost inevitable that a man deeply involved in social action should become self-righteous.¹

The optimism in regard to changing one's personal life does not ignore the human's tendency to resist change. There seems to be something in human nature, whether learned or acquired, that predisposes us to defend our world of reality against the threat of change. "We seek the type of experience which supports our present standards and rejects experiences--even potentially helpful ones--which seem to promise a disturbance to the current direction for our lives."² This resistance to change can be weakened if one is convinced that by changing persons, society in turn will be changed. The resistance to change by persons is often based on the feeling that it will not do any good as far as the world is concerned. Again and again we come back to the basic principles of the Faith at Work movement: personal change can and does affect society.

¹ Elton Trueblood, The New Man For Our Time (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 60.

² Keith Miller, The Becomers (Waco, Tx: Word Books, 1973), p. 119.

I have come to believe that many of the more obvious social conflicts are often symptoms of deeper common personal dilemmas--and not the other way around. And great renewal in Christian societies has taken place when persons or groups within the church have begun to see the way in which the gospel speaks specifically to that generation's central human problem as it is experienced by the common man.³

The Faith at Work movement is based on the simple promises of the Bible. Much of the appeal of this movement is its simplification of what the New Testament says about God's attitude toward man. This attitude is described in one word, "acceptance." This acceptance does not come after we have a change of life. It comes prior to this change. God loves his human creation. This love is not qualified. Again, it is grace that comes before judgment. Larson and Osborne say that man may be a mess, his behavior may be far from ideal, but the amazing message of God's word is that there is a love affair going on between the Creator and his creation.⁴ When it gets through to a person that God loves him, then he feels there is something in him that is lovable.

People change, and there is a transformation of their lives when they feel they are set free to love themselves because they have been loved. The result of this is a sense of worthwhileness. The feeling of acceptance and being loved, and in turn being able to love oneself,

³Ibid., p. 120.

⁴Bruce Larson and Ralph Osborne, The Emerging Church (Waco, Tx: Word Books, 1970), p. 33.

creates a sense of worth. This allows one to change not only his attitude toward other people, but toward the environment in which he lives. If a person feels he is worthwhile and other people are worthwhile, the physical surroundings are worth salvaging, the universe itself can be beautiful and majestic, and therefore, there is a new kind of affirmation toward life.

The Faith at Work people believe that this gospel of acceptance needs to be preached more strongly to counteract the self-hatred that is so rampant in our society. Both Bruce Larson and Ralph Osborne give their personal witness about the change in their own lives when they say:

We began our individual adventures with Christ with a sense of tremendous gratitude to God for his love and forgiveness. After a life thoroughly sprinkled with failure, compromise, and self-condemnation, the assurance that God does indeed love us and that the past was forgiven, was good news indeed.⁵

This word of acceptance that produces personal change is based primarily on Biblical and theological assumptions. But many articles in the movement's journal cite references to Transactional Analysis. The "I'm OK--You're OK" concept is used often in the groups. The concepts of the Faith at Work movement fit very comfortably with the approach of Transactional Analysis psychology. One of the major concepts of Transactional Analysis is that change is possible and the people who

⁵Ibid., p. 31.

change must believe in its possibilities.

Thomas A. Harris, the author of I'm OK--You're OK, states that three things make people want to change. One is if they hurt sufficiently, they beg for relief and want a change. Another factor is slow despair or boredom. When a person finally asks the ultimate question, "so what?" and asks this seriously, he is ready to change. A third factor that makes people want to change is the discovery that they can. "So often," says Harris, "people come into therapy with the idea 'I'll promise to let you help me if I don't have to get well.' But in order that a change might occur, this attitude has to be dissipated."⁶

Another parallel of Transactional Analysis and the Faith at Work movement is that both believe that man is free and not determined. There is a criticism of the Freudian orientation that a man or woman is what he or she is because of the past. Therefore, a person is not a responsible being because of the events of the past.⁷ Elton Trueblood elaborated this point:

The human mind...operated to a large extent by reference to final causes. This is so obvious that it might seem impossible to neglect it, yet it is neglected by everyone who denies freedom in employing the billiard ball analogy of causation. Of course, the billiard ball moves primarily by efficient causation, but man operates in a totally different way. Man is a creature whose present is constantly being dominated by reference to the non-existent, but nevertheless potent, future. What is not, influences what is. I have a hard problem but the outcome is not merely the result

⁶Thomas A. Harris, I'm OK--You're OK (New York: Harper & Row), p. 61.

⁷Ibid.

of a mechanical combination of forces, which is true of a physical body; instead I think, and most of my thought is concerned with what might be produced, provided certain steps could be taken.⁸

The Faith at Work movement does, indeed, find a strong ally in transactional psychology.

The important concept continues to be that change comes by acceptance. Paul Tillich would support this in regard to a person's dealing with guilt. He would agree also, that acceptance has to be not just in terms of God's acceptance, but in people's subsequent acceptance of themselves and each other. In fact, Tillich would say that healing comes only in relationship to persons. Acceptance by something which is less than personal could never overcome personal self-rejection. Tillich says, "A wall to which I confess cannot forgive me; no acceptance is possible if one is not accepted in a person to person relationship. But even when one is personally accepted, he still needs the transcendent courage to accept his acceptance."⁹ Just as Larson and Miller do not believe that one has to be worthy of acceptance, so Tillich says that you do not convince a patient that he is not guilty; otherwise you would prevent him from taking his guilt into his self-affirmation. Acceptance must include the guilt.¹⁰

⁸Elton Trueblood, General Philosophy, quoted in Ibid., p. 63.

⁹Paul Tillich, The Courage To Be (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), p. 166.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 16.

While the Faith at Work people do not use any heavy theological concepts in regard to this need of acceptance, their ideas do parallel much of what Tillich has to say about acceptance. Both agree that acceptance has to be in relationship to persons. They agree, also, that one needs to feel the acceptance of God before a change is realized. Tillich says that the final acceptance is in the power of being, which is God. The courage of confidence in dealing with guilt is not by anything definite, but the unconditional itself. One is accepted by that which infinitely transcends one's individual self.

This was the power of the reformers, particularly Luther. It was the acceptance of the unacceptable sinner into the transforming communion of God. Only when this happens does one have the courage to accept his guilt. He can do this because there is the certainty and immediacy of divine forgiveness, and through this divine forgiveness one has the courage to accept himself in spite of being unacceptable. In one of his sermons, Tillich claims that Jesus was not the maker of another law, but the conqueror of law.¹¹

If God accepts us in spite of our lack of achievements and in spite of our failures, conflicts, and moral weakness, then rather than denying these, we need to accept them. He is not saying yes to a perfect self because there is no perfect self. God is not saying yes to a self which knows only innocence, because there is no innocence. He

¹¹Paul Tillich, The Shaking of the Foundation (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), p. 102.

is saying yes to who we are. This is unconditional acceptance. Once we say yes to ourselves with this full acceptance that God accepts us, then there is freedom to grow.

From the Faith at Work point of view, this has great practical implication. This kind of acceptance does not cause one to be more entrenched in his failures. Rather, it causes one to seek improvement in his life because of this love and acceptance. If there were only judgment and condemnation, it would not allow the person to take the anxiety of guilt upon himself. Self-affirmation is the only way of dealing with guilt, according to Tillich. And this comes because there is acceptance.

There is a point of mysticism in acceptance in Christ in the Faith at Work movement. One finds this, also, in such men as Tillich. How can we have this faith? It is possible because one is drawn into the power of the new being in Christ, which makes faith possible. It is God placing value upon human personality in spite of moral failure.¹²

As he studied sources basic to the Faith at Work movement, the author frequently found this quote from Tillich:

Grace occurs in spite of separation and estrangement; grace is the reunion of life with life; the reconciliation itself with itself; grace is acceptance of that which is rejected; grace transforms fate into meaningful destiny; it changes guilt into confidence and courage. There is something triumphant in the word grace in spite of the abounding sin. Grace abounds much more.¹³

¹²Ibid., p. 102.

¹³Ibid., p. 156.

The Faith at Work movement affirms this. It is a celebration of the word of the gospel, that where sin and guilt abound, grace abounds much more because of the certainty of forgiveness and the commitment of acceptance by the God who is revealed in Christ.

One of the recent converts to the Faith at Work movement says: "When I allowed myself the luxury of feeling this love for my plain, ordinary self, I began to find a whole new life."¹⁴ Another convert says:

We became involved in a number of things such as Faith at Work, Transactional Analysis Workshop, and The Festival of Hope. During my first Faith at Work conference in Pennsylvania, we sang "Jesus Loves Me" in the public meeting and were to point to ourselves as we said "me." I suddenly realized that I had always sung that song thinking about little children and that God loved them, the dear little innocent ones, but not me. I'd never realized he loved me as I was, without anything attached. This was a tremendous feeling for me, and the tears started rolling down my cheeks. I was suddenly able to love myself and feel love for many people which I'd never felt before. To be loved by God without trying to earn it was overwhelming. I could also feel not guilty about the changes I'd made over the years, knowing that they had nothing to do with God's acceptance of me.¹⁵

Another person who felt his life changed by the Faith at Work movement expresses himself this way:

The Christian life isn't always spectacular. I don't have to climb mountains or to soar with the seagulls. It is for the way I am and

¹⁴Faith at Work, LXXXVIII (December, 1975), 16.

¹⁵Faith at Work, LXXXVIII (September, 1975), 13.

for the way things are today. The miracle is in me, the miracle of knowing I'm loved, I'm acceptable. It's not always incredible bliss, but it's real, and the miracle is spreading out.¹⁶

In a later chapter on group dynamics, the author will illustrate how these changes come about in groups. Although failure is not overcome, the sense of being a failure is. In person-to-person groups, the author saw the power of acceptance.

Once this acceptance is achieved, the Faith at Work movement sees the next step as commitment. Often ministers will urge moderation in speaking of the necessity of specific commitment, because they are not sure most people in the congregation have reached the point where they are willing or able to become committed. They may be frightened by some of the radical implications of the act of commitment.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was quite clear in stating the necessity for taking the commitment step: "Unless a definite step is demanded, the call vanishes into thin air, and if men imagine they can follow Jesus without taking this step, they are deluding themselves."¹⁷ The optimism for growth and change comes only when one has been willing to come to this commitment after feeling the changing forces within him because of God's acceptance and other people's acceptance.

A central position of the Faith at Work movement is that if a

¹⁶ Faith at Work Magazine, LXXXVIII (December, 1975), 17.

¹⁷ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, The Cost of Discipleship (New York: Macmillan, 1960), p. 53.

person comes to this point of change by acceptance in spite of obvious weaknesses, he has the courage to be vulnerable and open toward others. Growth is not thought of in terms of achievement; it is not thought of in terms of climbing up the ladder of righteousness. Growth is thought of in terms of letting others know you and then having them reflect your weaknesses and failures, and dealing honestly with them.

Keith Miller says:

This might mean, for instance, that the more totally and transparently I am being Keith Miller with you, living for God, the more nearly you will see Jesus Christ through me, and the Scripture indicates that although we all receive the same Spirit and are to imitate God in being loving, each of us will be given the grace and the specific respective gifts we particularly need to grow up in Christ. (Eph. 4)¹⁸

Growth comes by transparency. It does not come by creating a better image of ourselves. It comes by being who we are in relation to others. It comes not by works of righteousness, but by the grace of forgiveness. Miller makes a strong point on this issue when he says, "I saw that the purpose of growth was not a state or end at all. Growth has to do with a direction of one's life, and the direction is toward honesty, transparency, and a willingness to speak of one's failures and deal with them."¹⁹ But growth does not always mean the overcoming of weakness. One might be dogged with a weakness all his life like St. Paul

¹⁸ Miller, p. 136.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 154.

was, and yet speak of grace abounding. Often growth comes by continuing to acknowledge one's weakness; but that in being weak, one becomes strong. The strength comes in awareness where one feels vulnerable and is therefore open to grace which enables him to live more fully. Although the changing of one's life is a beginning, growth is not an arrival. It is always a process. There is no status and no spiritual or emotional closure point in life at which one attains total fulfillment.

While the Faith at Work movement does not in any way diminish the importance of education, it does not feel that the educative process in itself is enough. Education may inform us, but it does not transform us. While through knowledge we may realize things about our lives, we often cannot re-center our lives around higher goals. The evidence is overwhelming that most of us cannot make the basic changes at a purely cognitive level.

The Faith at Work people are therefore in conflict with many Christian educators who seem to assume that once one is cognitive of a situation, change can come about. Keith Miller, influenced by Carl Jung, says that in the face of the very real powers that dominate us, only an equally real power or encounter can offer help. No intellectual system can counterbalance the blind power of our seemingly instinctual course.²⁰

²⁰Ibid., p. 126.

One of the key books in the understanding of the Faith at Work movement is Keith Miller's The Becomers. In this book he speaks of growth in terms of becoming, and in terms of process. The process is through openness and vulnerability to each other in which one finds creativity and freedom. In openness, richness and love are discovered in one another's lives as persons are willing to share themselves as they are. The growth process comes about when one gets in touch with his own true feelings and is learning also to express these true feelings to other people.

Another aspect of this concept of growth is the idea of surrender. In surrender there is a sense of turning loose, of abandon. This means the turning loose of what we usually think of as security. It is surrendering everything but our final dependence upon God. In this act of surrender there is a faith that often is frightening. But in this risking of surrender, one is more free to live creatively and to be the agent of healing.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin has indicated that this kind of relinquishment is a perfect preparation for death. For the end of life, the Christian who has surrendered all material and status securities as ultimate, has²¹ only to turn loose the body to be unencumbered in joining God.

We see something of the radical demands of the Faith at Work

²¹Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Letters From a Traveler (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), quoted in *ibid.*, p. 160.

movement in this final step in the understanding of change and growth. It is this surrendering that people in middle and upper middle class strata of society find difficult to accept. The author's own experience in group and personal counseling verifies this resistance. For so many years the whole emphasis of American middle class has been to build up areas of life in order to feel more and more secure. When it is suggested that status and credits and material achievements are to be surrendered, there is a feeling that too much is being asked.

Miller states that this radical demand must be sustained. We are reminded of Abraham, who evidently had a secure place. But the Scriptures indicate he had to surrender all of this to go to a foreign land where his safety would be uncertain. The surrendering process always seems to proceed from safety to insecurity. It is when we throw ourselves completely open to God and have the willingness to have the props of security pulled out that we know what the possibilities of growth are. The radicalness of this faith is quoted in a 19th century prayer:²²

Lord, I abandon myself to you. I have tried in every way I could think to manage myself, and to make myself what I thought I ought to be, but I've always failed. Now I give it up to you. I give you permission to take entire possession of me.

Probably the greatest and most radical demand of the Faith at

²²Hannah Smith, The Christian Secret of a Happy Life (Old Tappan, NJ: Revell, 1968)

Work movement lies in this concept of surrender. The paradox comes when we do not surrender ourselves so that we will be absorbed into God. We surrender ourselves so that we might become more ourselves. While in many mystical religions the idea of surrender is to relieve one of the responsibility of self, in the Faith at Work movement there is the insistence this surrender be an effort to become a more authentic self. It is giving up a secure, protected, defensive self in order to find an open, vulnerable, free self. It is in surrendering ourselves that the gift of our true selves is returned.

Over a hundred years ago, Kirkegaard tried to describe the whole Christian, but his contemporaries could not grasp the naturalness of the man he pictured:

Good God, is this really he? Why, he looks like an inspector of taxes--he belongs wholly to the finite; and there is no townsman dressed in his Sunday best who spends his Sunday afternoons in Fredricksburg, who treads the earth more firmly than he; he belongs to the earth, no bourgeois. In him you will find no trace of that exquisite exclusiveness which distinguishes the knight of the infinite. He takes pleasure in all things, takes part in everything, and everything he does, he does with the perseverance of earthly men whose souls hang fast to what they're doing.²³

The change and growth of the Faith at Work movement brings people down to earth to be involved with people, and to be part of the misery and pain. It is in no sense a kind of mystical experience where there is withdrawal. The growth is toward being an authentic self. The growth is toward the open and transparent self.

²³Søren Kierkegaard, Purity of Hearts To Will One Thing (New York: Harper & Row, 1938), p. 173.

CHAPTER V

INSTITUTIONAL EMPHASIS--PIETY OR ACTIVISM

There is no clear doctrine of the church in the Faith at Work movement. What can be discerned is only a definite emphasis. However, the author feels that there need not be a doctrine of the church to have an effective ministry. It is very clear in our history that the early Methodist Society did not have a doctrine of the church either. It was an evangel within the matrix of the church, the matrix being the Church of England. The Faith at Work movement serves in a similar capacity. It works as a matrix within many of the established denominations. While the Faith at Work movement is separate as a distinct organization, there is no intention of it becoming a church.

This parallels the history of the Methodist Church. While the societies of early Methodism had functioned as an evangelical mission, it was not intended that they become a church. Eventually, however, they did become a church. It is the author's feeling that the United Methodist Church still does not have a clear-cut doctrine of the church. Its uniqueness is its mission, its witness, and its discipline. All these aspects are functional and do not combine into a comprehensive doctrine of the church in terms of a conventional, systematic theology. However, the function definitely defines the church in terms of its vital force. The author believes that a too rigid doctrine of the

church hinders the church in relation to ecumenical discussion. Life Magazine once characterized the Methodist Church as short on theology and long on good works. The same characterization could also be made of the Faith at Work movement. They are very short on theology, but very long on their particular emphasis.

Dr. Albert Outler suggests that part of the success of Methodism is that it is designed to function best in an encompassing environment of catholicity, which really means the effectual and universal Christian community. While there has been criticism that there is a lack of denominational emphasis, one might look upon this as an asset. "Preoccupation with self-maintenance distracts us from what is actually our peculiar raison d'être, and this is why a self-conscious and denominational-centered Methodist is such a crashing bore to all but his own peculiar kith, kin, and kind."¹ Dr. Outler goes on to point out that there is a tension between "ecclesia per se"--institutional maintenance and management--and "ecclesia in actu"--proclamation, nurture, and service.

There are some parallels between the Methodist Church and the Faith at Work movement. They are both definitely "ecclesia in actu"--proclamation, nurture, and service. They are matrix within the larger

¹Albert Outler, "Do Methodists Have a Doctrine of the Church?" (paper read at The Oxford Institute, Oxford, England, 1962), p. 27.

institutional church. This is not far from Wesley's understanding of the church; for he defined the church as mission, and as an enterprise of saving and maturing souls in Christian life. This vision was to be implemented within the Anglican perspective of the church as form and institution. Wesley knew what the Methodist Societies were intended to be, and he set himself to make and keep them an evangelical order defined by the unique mission "...to spread Scriptural holiness over these lands."² In similar style, the Faith at Work movement intends to be this evangelical emphasis within the institution of the church, and to spread the doctrine of personal change, vulnerability, and spiritual growth. There is very little desire to achieve radical changes in institutional forms. However, it is believed that there can be some creative innovations in some of these forms. There is no desire by the Faith at Work movement to destroy or tear down the institutional forms.

The Faith at Work movement is very concerned that the institution not fall into the trap of merely "keeping the machinery going." There is a feeling that the institutional church has done too much housekeeping. Keith Miller says that in his own experience in vestry meetings (Episcopal Church), he felt like shouting:

Men were not doing anything which is relevant to anyone's real needs, even their own. We're just keeping the church machine going because, well, because we don't know anything else³ to do. For God's sake, let's take a new look at what we're doing.

²Ibid., p. 14.

³Keith Miller and Bruce Larson, The Edge of Adventure (Waco, Tx: Word Books, 1974), p. 143.

In criticizing the institution of the church, Faith at Work people do not in any sense withdraw their loyalty. They are concerned about some of the sickness and the self-centeredness in the corporate church. Therefore, their method is to bypass many of the institutional functions and organizations in order to do their own thing. The consequence is that the Faith at Work movement is made up of people from all denominations. It has grown into a kind of interdenominational group whose purpose is to witness clearly and to lead men into a new style of life. However, it has to be said again that there is no effort to pull people out of the church. Rather, people are encouraged to stay within the church with a personal renewal witness.

Later in this chapter the author will state the value that the Faith at Work movement places upon the institutional church, and how it serves the church. In Larson's and Osborne's The Emerging Church, they ask, "Will the emerging church destroy the established church? The answer is emphatically no."⁴ There is no encouragement of clergymen or laymen to destroy what has been. In fact, there is a wide allowance for those who find meaning in the traditional institutional church. The Faith at Work movement believes that for many people this is valid, and should be recognized. But for those for whom the traditional, institutional approach is not enough, a new mission within the

⁴Bruce Larson and Ralph Osborne, The Emerging Church (Waco, Tx: Word Books, 1970), p. 151.

church is imperative.

It is the Church's responsibility to continue to minister the grace of God to individuals through worship, teaching, administration of the sacraments, calling and caring. But it is the vision that gives shape and direction, dignity and force, to all that is happening within a faithful congregation. For without a vision the people perish.⁵

The Faith at Work movement desires to give life to this vision and to be a vital sect within the larger institution.

However, when the movement speaks of renewal, it refers to something that has never happened in the institutional church. It says that renewal implies the church was once what God intended it to be and therefore, if the church is renewed, there will be a return to a "golden age." The church, from its earliest beginning, has never been the model of the koinonia community. It is still an emerging church, and is in process, moving toward fulfillment of its calling. There is no perfect model in history to which one can turn as being the church in the sense of the New Testament hope. In one sense the word "renewal" is inadequate to describe what the Faith at Work movement is about. Renewal constitutes a new thing which God can do in his day with this church in our day.

It cannot be stated that the Faith at Work movement is anti-institutional. Larson and Osborne state that there is a hope that the

⁵ Ibid.

mission in which they are involved will be outmoded by the 1980's, and that in future years there will be a new emphasis that will continue to give new life to the church. There is a fear that even the Faith at Work emphasis will get into rigid forms and will be institutionalized. The vision of the Faith at Work movement is that in every decade God desires to do something new within the church. They are fully aware that whatever new forms are given for the church now and which may be born in our day, could become an institutional albatross a decade hence.⁶

The mark of the Christian Church in its most authentic forms is not that it always be right, but that it be capable of correction, rediscovery, re-evaluation, and change. A church that rigidly maintains it has at one time received God's guidance and is now remaining faithful to that guidance...either takes itself too seriously, or else does not understand the nature of God.⁷

While the Faith at Work movement is basically loyal to the institution of the church, it does not withhold the valid criticism which it believes is warranted. The author feels that anyone who loves the church, would also be critical of some of its weaknesses. The question must be asked, "Is the church fulfilling its mission?" One man asked an official of Westinghouse Corporation how Westinghouse would run the church if it had the opportunity. The answer that came back was profound in its simplicity: "We would ask only two questions: What products are we trying to produce? Are we producing them?"

⁶Ibid., p. 10.

⁷Ibid., p. 140.

If the church is interested in numbers, it is interested in the wrong thing. As we face the future and seek to find the shape of the emerging church, it is quality that counts and not quantity. There is also the feeling that too much emphasis has been put on location. It must have high visibility or be a focal point in the community. The Faith at Work movement says that perhaps the church should be hidden in a corner somewhere at the heartbeat of where its members live and work and socialize. It is certainly possible that the church can become more of a real mission in a deep and richer way, even in a shopping center, a school, a community hall, or in a private home; the sanctuary need not always be on a spacious suburban acreage.⁸ Larson and Osborne go further in saying that perhaps the church should own no property at all. For public worship the members might rent a hall or theater, or a high school gymnasium, instead of pouring their available funds into a church building, or a school. There may be many other kinds of buildings, even perhaps, in deteriorating neighborhoods. This in no way says that the other kind of church, with its beautiful sanctuary, is not carrying out a significant ministry. But it does say that there are alternative kinds of worship.

One of the essential ideas in the Faith at Work movement concerning the institutional church is the dichotomy between clergy and laity. There is a feeling that this is so deeply ingrained in institutional thinking that it cannot be removed. The laymen's conditioning has been so

⁸Ibid., p. 51.

strong that it is very difficult for them to feel that they are full-time apostles. They feel their task is following and supporting their minister or leader. The idea has been expressed that some churches should not have a full-time pastor, that the clergyman should hold a secular job, and that the laymen and minister should join in assuming the pastoral and other responsibilities. There are many examples where the parish operates like a well oiled machine with a highly skilled professional staff, and with selected laymen in key spots. But if one probes deeply into the life of such congregations and their ministries to the community, it might be discovered that little is done to advance Christ's kingdom on the earth.

Charismatic preaching, lay skills and talents, buildings and budgets, creative curriculum, sensitive programming, participation of membership in attendance and stewardship--all of these may be important, but they have very little in common with the resources that seem to have had such a powerful effect on the church described in the Book of Acts. The Apostolic Church had little by way of the resources listed. Their resources seemed to have been different, not only in quantity, but also in kind.⁹

It is necessary to understand the clergy-laity relationship. The clergyman must feel that he is a part of the laity ("laos", meaning the people of God), and the layman must acknowledge he is a minister along with the clergyman. There is no real difference between clergy-laymen, except in function; frequently even this is shared. The institutional church must be willing to be innovative in all directions.

⁹ Ibid., p. 52.

For example, one church has a ministry to jazz musicians. Because these men work at night and sleep during the day, a special vesper service is scheduled in which the musician and his or her family can participate, along with the pastors.

Even in the heavy tasks of administration, the laymen should bear these demands with the professional clergy. Often the laymen will have gifts that far exceed the minister's. The Apostle Peter has a word of instruction to the church concerning spiritual gifts: "Each one as a good manager of God's different gifts, must use for the good of others the special gift he has received from God--so that in all things praise may be given to God through Jesus Christ to whom belong the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen." (I Peter 4:11) TEV¹⁰

The author has discussed the attitude of the Faith at Work movement toward the institutional church. He feels it is worthwhile to consider the relationship of pietism to activism. It could also be referred to as the division between the personal and the social. It is evident that in many churches there is a polarization between those who believe in personal religious experience per se, and those who are political activists. Elton Trueblood quotes William Temple: "I would urge that we try to recover in some measure the horror of the divisions

¹⁰Few scholars believe that I Peter was actually written by Peter the Apostle. Only the last part of this Scripture conforms to the New Testament text of I Peter 4:11.

among Christians."¹¹ Although the Faith at Work movement is trying to bring these different poles together, the author questions whether the movement is fair in its appraisal of both camps.

If one examines the writings of Elton Trueblood (a fellow traveler, and a great influence upon Keith Miller), he might see the middle road for which the movement strives. The author believes, however, that Trueblood goes beyond what has actually happened in the movement. Even he falls on the side of the personal religion and pietism more than on the side of the social activists. Trueblood is looked to as the "heavy", or the theologian who is most respected within the movement. Thus, it is important to consider his ideas of polarization in the institutional church. He says that it is a mistake to suppose that we must choose between being liberals and being conservatives inasmuch as every sound person is something of both. It is never "either-or", but "both" that is needed.

Trueblood points out the fragmentation that happens to the gospel when laymen have to choose between individual needs and the needs of society. Those who are on the side of the individual point to the evidence that it is the individual who makes historical events. Trueblood turns to John R. Mott as an example of one man who was converted

¹¹Elton Trueblood, The New Man For Our Time (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 15.

and who changed countless lives and altered history. Trueblood would substantiate the Faith at Work movement when it says that changes in society occur because of changes in men. True evolution begins in a man's heart. "The best college is not the one with the newest curriculum, but the one with the ablest teachers. The church is at its best, not as an efficient hierarchy, but as an incendiary fellowship, and it is individual men who start the fires."¹² St. Augustine portrayed the entire Christian enterprise as that in which one loving heart sets another on fire. Friends of George Buttrick have often heard him say, "If religion does not begin with the individual, it never begins, but if it ends with the individual, it ends."¹³

Trueblood is saying that there can be a corrective, if each side will take the other seriously. The evangelical who is critical of those who are trying to do good and are active in this service needs to be reminded that Christ's invitation does not always mean inner peace in the midst of human suffering. This kind of evangelical may indict himself for lack of compassion. He may be guilty of having no compassion toward the impoverished or deprived members of his own society.

The polarization widens when the members fall into the camp either of the activists or the pietists. There is no way to determine how many

¹²Ibid., p. 102.

¹³Ibid., p. 28.

in the institutionalized church fall into each camp. But anyone who has been active in the local church knows this polarization exists, and that it is often the cause of great concern. In fact, this polarization can be the cause of a split church. It frequently results in bad feelings. Sometimes the church is so injured that recovery takes many years.

Trueblood's interest in the Faith at Work movement, as the author sees it, lies in helping to hold these two factions together within the institutional church. They need to learn how to appreciate each other. The church needs the activists who attack the entrenched social evils in our society. It needs those who have the kind of courage to picket and sign petitions, and engage in protests. Without these people the church would seem to be too timid, or even too cowardly to speak out. However, the pietist who emphasizes the life of prayer and devotion and personal evangelism is much needed in the local church, also. The activists need to know the importance of inner peace and spiritual sustenance that comes with the discipline of the pietists.

However, if the church were left to the pietistic alone, it would have little to say in the midst of glaring social evils. It would be guilty of not saying a relevant word even when human dignity is trampled upon. William Temple once wrote: "It would be strange if man acted only in the inorganic and non-spiritual, and dealt with spirits akin to himself only by the indirect testimony of the rest of his creation."¹⁴

¹⁴William Temple, Nature, Man, and God (London:Macmillan, 1934), p. 318.

Trueblood defends piety because, he says, it has been misunderstood. The trouble with piety is that it is not deep enough. He would like to relieve piety from many of its connotations and give it respect. Piety does not mean a few hasty prayers or reading the Bible, or just attending worship. Helmut Thielicke reminds us that Luther prayed for hours each day. In fact, he could not have continued his gigantic labors without this prayer.

Trueblood is trying to bring the concept of roots and fruits together as the model for the present day Christian. The fruits are the active participation in the world. It is service and it is alleviation of human suffering through personal deeds and policies. The roots he interprets as devotion, as worship, as spiritual discipline. He says there is a need for inner peace if one is going to face a hectic world. He says, "This is how the kingdom grows. First, a few people are deeply changed; then they sink their spiritual roots into the soil of God's love, and then the conditions under which they and their brothers live are changed. Renewal begins on the inside."¹⁵

Because we cannot reasonably expect to erect a constantly expanding structure of social activism on a constantly diminishing foundation of faith, attention to the cultivation of the inner life is our first order of business even in a period of rapid social change.¹⁶

¹⁵Trueblood, p. 68.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 6.

Trueblood is saying that the church has to be responsible to both the secular and the sacred; but if the church is only secular in operating in the world, it will be just another secular institution.

It might seem that Trueblood is making a division between the secular and the sacred. The author thinks Trueblood is making this distinction for purposes of emphasis. The church represents a place where a man can have a trustworthy religious experience and where spiritual disciplines are available, devotional classics are encouraged to be read, and the deepening of one's own life is encouraged. Trueblood is correct in assuming that the church is unique in this service. What secular institution has this to offer? But Trueblood has no intention of separating piety and service. The roots and the fruits of the faith are one organic context.

While to some extent a distinction can be made between the church and the world, there should be disdain for any separatism between the pietistic and the activistic. Both serve as correctives to each other. The pietists need action; and the activists need piety. For the whole Christian, there must be the balance between the two emphases. This is the image that this present age demands if the church is to be effective. The best leaders are both service-centered and Christ-centered.

While the Faith at Work movement leans strongly on the side of personal change and spiritual discipline first, it is cognizant of the danger of an ingrown pietism. It recognizes that if one ignores the struggles against injustice, the judgment has to be that this kind of

religious experience is largely self-centered. "Indeed, it is possible to bask in a religious experience that, though not sensual, is really another form of self-indulgence."¹⁷ Too often the person who has stressed personal piety and heart-warming experience is also being negligent about poor housing, racial discrimination, and blighting conditions of a community. While there is serious criticism of the pious who have inadequate social concern, the strongest criticism is still reserved for the activists who do not have deep roots in the faith and the disciplines of the church. The person who knows how to picket but not how to pray, is bound to wither. If there is emphasis only on service without the life of devotion, the result is usually hardened and calloused people, and as Trueblood has said, a calculated arrogance. The activists might find some humility in the words found in Imitation of Christ: "Be not angry that you cannot make others as you wish them to be, since you cannot make yourself as you wish to be."¹⁸

The Christian within the modern institution of the church has a vocation that is three-fold. He is called to pray, to serve, and to think; and he is called to do all these together. Trueblood writes: "The best thing we can do for our troubled world is to increase the

¹⁷Ibid., p. 26.

¹⁸"Imitations," Book I, Chapter 16. This passage is mentioned in Boswell's Life of Samuel Johnson under date of 1778. This sentence is a good example of datelessness.

number who, because they are committed to the three-fold pattern, are the genuinely new men of our time."¹⁹

The question is, what is the highest priority? In the Faith at Work movement, the implication is that individual change, intellectual integrity and reverence come prior to compassion. There is no hint that it may work the other way: compassion for the world, service in the secular world, may lead to a need of a deeper life of devotion. While this latter order is hardly recognized in the Faith at Work movement, the author believes it is demonstrated many times. In his ministry, he has heard a layman speak of working in filthy Mexican infirmaries which have nothing to do with Christian faith or the church. After the draining experience and the heavy demands, he turned to the Scriptures to find strength for his task. The compassion for his fellow men made him seek deeper spiritual resources. He has become an active churchman, a lay preacher, and still continues his work within the jails where Mexicans are incarcerated.

The author does not believe that the Faith at Work movement has given enough attention to this second order of process. Harry Emerson Fosdick said, "Personal and social religion is like looking through the Hudson Tunnel. Some people start with personal religion and end up at the other side in social service. Some people start with social service

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 35.

and end up with personal faith."²⁰ The author is not convinced it has to be an "either-or" matter. It is clear that the Faith at Work movement feels strongly that a spiritual conversion discipline comes prior to any social service. Trueblood says that pietism can be close to the drug religion because both are trying to blank out the world. Both want rapture and ecstasy. This emphasis on rapture is a very old heresy. The late Edith Hamilton is quoted as saying that the essential weakness of the mystery religions of ancient Greece appeared at precisely this point. The mysteries produced ecstasy, but nothing more. They had no power to alter the moral structure of society.²¹

The author believes that we need to balance the analysis of an educator and a scholar with the views of a practical layman like Keith Miller, who came to a new appreciation of the institution of the church after turning away from it. Miller indicates that after the excitement of the new conversion experience began to wear off, he, and others joining with him in this new experience, found themselves facing longer range personal problems. They discovered they could not live only by evangelical fervor. For this was quite different from the ordinary task in relation to secular life. Miller, himself, says, "This evangelical

²⁰ Harry Emerson Fosdick, The Hope of the World (New York: Harper & Row, 1933), p. 30.

²¹ This may not be fair to the mystery religions, for they were a moral force for more than 1,000 years.

fervor was an exciting but frothy life, and some of us yearned for the stability of the humdrum routine of living."²²

In spite of his criticisms of the conventional institutional church, Miller sees great value in it. Speaking of the Faith at Work conferences, he said, "I saw literally hundreds of men and women, some who had never been active in the church, finding purpose and direction in a new religious experience, but who was going to take them to raise?" Often these conferences got people started, but what was needed next was a group of lasting continuity within one's own community. This would have to be a continuing fellowship; and only the church offered this continuing kind of fellowship. Miller writes:

I saw the Church could not be the Church without a company of men and women with drastically changed purposes and direction, deeply motivated to be a servant devoted to their Lord. But I also saw that evangelical awakening cannot become a mature reformation until it leads people into a brokenness and alienation of the secular world. The only two alternatives I could see for me were (1) to get someone to start another denomination, or (2) to get back in my own.²³

This is an old dilemma, but the Faith at Work movement believes that the institutional church should make room for different kinds of groups. There ought to be various sects within the institutional church. It is significant that the leaders of the Faith at Work movement, Keith Miller and Bruce Larson, are working basically within the institution and are

²²Miller and Larson, p. 147.

²³Ibid., p. 149.

uninterested in starting a new church. The author feels it is fair to say that the Faith at Work movement is in no way anti-institutional in the sense of rejection. Its renewal emphasis reveals a positive attitude, not a negative one of tearing down. The Faith at Work movement continues to see itself as working within the institutional church.

CHAPTER VI

GROUP DYNAMICS OF FAITH AT WORK

The group dynamics of the Faith at Work movement incorporates its basic tenets. One emphasis mentioned before was vulnerability and openness, as Miller and Larson write:

One of the great functions of Christian small groups for me has been to provide a place where I can share feelings like these and discover that I am "not alone in my loneliness." And taking personal risks on the adventure to be vulnerable for God and people (with a group to come back to) somehow has helped me to overcome my basic human fears.¹

People in the church are often forced to live in quiet desperation with their own private problems, thoughts, and deeds. They are paralyzed by feelings of guilt that can neither be acknowledged nor healed through the regular programs of the church. Too many people live a "cover-up" life and conceal their moral and ethical failures. Churchmen may masquerade goodness while within they are seething with serious conflict. When one refuses to be vulnerable, he assumes an image. In the church this is often the image of self-righteousness. The late Paul Tillich wrote:

And now let us look once more at those whom we have described as the righteous ones... The righteousness of the righteous ones is hard

¹ Keith Miller and Bruce Larson, Living the Adventure (Waco, Tx: Word Books, 1975), p. 18.

and self-assured. They, too, want forgiveness, but they believe that they do not need much of it. And so their righteous actions are warmed by very little love...

Why do children turn from their righteous parents and husbands from their righteous wives, and vice versa? Why do Christians turn away from their righteous pastors? Why do people turn away from righteous neighborhoods? Why do many turn away from righteous Christianity and from the Jesus it paints and the God it proclaims? Why do they turn to those who are not considered to be the righteous ones?

Often certainly, it is because they want to escape judgment. But more often it is because they seek a love which is rooted in forgiveness, and this the righteous cannot give.²

In a group where there can be openness, the humanness of people is accepted; success and failure can be shared. Such groups should be a place where honesty and truthfulness, and even failure, are accepted. The hidden areas of one's life can disable a person. Healing comes when a person can share this hidden part so that his failures can be seen in the proper perspective. Then one is able to deal with them. Keith Miller writes:

I personally believe our generation is looking for this open attitude instead of that which has so often prevailed in the church of, "Oh, we must not talk about that or they will think..." If anyone thinks these sorts of problems are new in the Christian community, ask him to check Paul's letters to the earliest Christian small groups (e.g. I Corinthians 1:5f).³

The Faith at Work movement believes that belonging to such groups is necessary to prevent one from self-deception. Human beings tend to

²Paul Tillich, "To Whom Much Is Given", in his The New Being (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955), pp. 13-14.

³Keith Miller, A Second Touch (Waco, Tx: Word Books, 1967), p. 100.

lie to themselves when they are left to their own devices.

Perhaps this is why Jesus said that where two or three are gathered together in his name, he will be in the midst of us. This is what the Body of Christ is all about. We need one another, so that we can be motivated to be honest, and have some measure of objectivity--and even prophetic insight--as we begin to open ourselves.⁴

The attitude in groups must be to encourage honesty. If a person cannot tell his brother about his sin, he can become unreal and phony.

The Bible often speaks of the sin of self-justification. Bruce Larson once asked a Professor of Clinical Psychology for the essential ingredient in training an effective therapist. "Oh, that's easy," he said; "the people who become effective are those whose lives are transparent to their patients." And then he added slowly, "But we don't know how to put this quality of openness and transparency into the people who come for training."⁵ The dynamics of the Faith at Work movement is to achieve vulnerability, openness, and transparency.

Another characteristic of the Faith at Work movement in its group emphasis is that it is not confrontation or encounter in the more usual sense. In encounter groups one is frequently allowed to attack another member of the group. Sometimes this is a merciless attack and cannot be tolerated by a fragile person. More damage is done than good accomplished. Keith Miller reminds us that in small group movements

⁴ Miller and Larson, p. 100.

⁵ Bruce Larson, Ask Me To Dance (Waco, Tx: Word Books, 1972), p. 86.

there seems to be two distinct approaches to breaking through people's facades. It is almost as if we were chickens trapped in our shells. One way to break the shell is with a hammer, and some psychologists have found uninhibited confrontation very effective with tough shells. But an untrained lay leader may have some crippled and helpless chicks on his hands. The other way to make contact with the person inside is to create an atmosphere of safety and warmth in which the chicken can come out from the inside at his own speed. The ratio of healthy chicks seemed higher under these circumstances. This is the approach of most of the small groups in the Faith at Work movement.⁶

This approach involves expressing one's own feelings, not attacking another. For instance, if there is conflict and argument, persons are encouraged to say what they feel. They can say such things as, "Wait, I'm feeling hurt, and put down as a person, and I'm wanting to hurt you. What are your feelings?" And the other person expresses his feelings rather than replying with an attack. It is not in any way a method of verbally blasting someone else. The approach does not operate in the realm of attack and counter-attack. In fact, any kind of attack in the Faith at Work groups is discouraged. This differs from many encounter groups where hostility and feelings are encouraged to come out, even if they are directed toward another person in the group.

⁶ Miller and Larson, p. 59.

One rule the Faith at Work movement insists upon is that rather than attacking another member, one must talk about his problems in the first person singular. This rule of thumb leads more toward a confessional kind of honesty than to projecting one's feelings upon another. If a person is willing to confess his own personal feelings, it is much easier for others to begin to open their lives, to expose who they are, and let others see their deepest emotions.⁷

Rather than fostering verbal attacks such as are found in many encounter groups, persons are encouraged to listen to one another. Groups are encouraged to practice the art of listening because listening is experienced as love. When one is listened to, there is a profound affirmation of the worth of the person who is speaking. When one listens to others, he is saying, "You are worthwhile, and what I have to say is not meaningless." This is translated to mean, "If what I am saying is not meaningless, then maybe I am not meaningless. Perhaps I am of some value." The author personally experienced this in a group with which he worked. When he listened intently to someone's hurts and pain, the transformation that began to take place in that person's life was noticeable. This is what happens when someone cares enough to give full attention to what is being said.

As has been said, the Faith at Work movement discourages any confrontation or encounter that would generate hostility or resentments.

⁷Ibid., p. 82.

The ground rules are carefully explained, and they are interpreted to mean that no one is to come within a group to vent his hatred or frustrations upon that group. This is not to say that encounter groups are never effective in therapy.

The author can speak from personal experience of a fairly large church school class of young adults which used the encounter method. The mood was "you can say anything in any way you feel, to anybody." The leader defended this method by saying it was therapeutic. However, it was difficult for new members to be initiated into the class because they were too open to attack which was sometimes vicious, and they were not ready for this type of experience. Gradually the class, which was the largest in the church, began to disintegrate. People who had been close friends were now in a broken relationship. Finally the class disbanded, and the church lost the membership of seventy-five per cent of its members.

While there may be a place for such encounter groups outside the church, the author believes that the Faith at Work movement is correct in saying that, within the institution of the church, such freedom in attacking another person is not redemptive. The confession was not designed to use another person as a target. Confession always involves humility on the part of the confessor, where he or she is able to sincerely expose grievances and failures. While attack puts people on the defensive, the confessional method creates an atmosphere where others join in expressing where they hurt. As Lyman Coleman says in the Faith

at Work periodical of December, 1975:

As I make myself known to you without posing or pretending, there is every reason to believe that you will identify with me at least in part, and that you will care about me. And if you listen attentively to me without judging or belittling me, I will find myself trusting you, especially if the two of us are responding with gratitude to God's acceptance of us as we are.

The goal in the group is to achieve the sense of inclusion. Inclusion is not achieved by attack; it is achieved in a spirit of trust. Every effort is made to prevent any member being pushed out because of another's feelings of rejection, hostility, or resentment. The Faith at Work movement is definitely not based on the usual idea of confrontation and encounter.

Another unique characteristic of the Faith at Work movement is that it is not altogether dependent upon the leaders. While many therapy groups are dependent upon the skills of the leader, the Faith at Work approach is not. Many books on group therapy warn that the leader must be well trained, and must understand psychology, or there can be great damage to participants within the group. This is not a concern within the Faith at Work groups. There is a confidence in the layman and in his ability to be a group leader. This is illustrated by an experiment that was carried on in a London mental institution (name withheld.) Three groups were formed, one with a psychiatrist, one with a clinical psychologist, and one with a layman who was well-adjusted and had a healthy outlook toward life. The results were amazing. There was more actual therapy and healing in the layman's group than there was

in the other two groups led by what are usually called "the experts."

The Faith at Work movement does not believe that healing comes chiefly through techniques or through someone who has had extensive professional training. What one is, and how one relates, is more important than training or techniques. Being a dedicated, healthy person is more important than techniques or training in affecting what transpires between people. This goes back to the idea of the priesthood of all believers. One does not have to be a professional to minister to another. The author believes this is the meaning of Luther's daring statement that we are to become Christ for each other, and love and receive love and forgiveness in his name.

One essential of the dynamics of the Faith at Work movement is that it is Christian-centered. The groups are meant to be koinonia fellowships. The movement is not just an advocate of groups--it is an advocate of koinonia. Groups can mean many things. Every Christian has a root need to participate in koinonia. It is almost a command.

Lyman Coleman, writing in the Faith at Work periodical of September, 1975, asks the meaning of koinonia. "Koinonia" is one of the three Greek Words for the church in the New Testament. It means mutuality or commonality--like having things in common. It was an integral part of the early church. Taking part in koinonia included sharing in the meals and prayers. (Acts 2:42) While we translate "koinonia" into "fellowship", Coleman feels it really means depth, community of love, and honesty with others in God's presence. He quotes Henri Nouwen:

In koinonia the central issue of the the Gospel is 'Man, where are you and where is your brother?'⁸

Koinonia is when we find one another. Adam and Eve had koinonia with God before the fall. Nothing was hidden; there was mutuality that was delight. But guilt destroyed this. "I was afraid, so I ran and hid." When one hides, the koinonia fellowship is broken. When one turns away from this kind of fellowship, he not only hides, he turns toward self-justification. Coleman says that the understanding of koinonia is found in the question God asks Adam: "Man, where are you?"

In this Christian-centered or koinonia group, one finds a place where love prevails over judgment. It is safe to come out into the open. There is nothing contrived, nothing covered; and it is a place where fear is overcome by love. Thus the Faith at Work movement is Christ-centered in its groups. Coleman says:

The Koinonia groups is being personal in Christ. Koinonia springs from the difference that Christ's presence, word, and love, makes. It has available a word beyond our words, a hope beyond our time together, a source of love in which our love remains faithful, a truth greater than our dim perceptions. But koinonia needs a home base. I cannot live it by myself any more than I can experience love without relationship. I need you to keep me growing in God's love and truth--to open my eyes to myself, to you, to him, and to a larger world--to come with my desperate needs to get free of the deception of self-justification, to be affirmed in new hope of continuing its costly acceptance and to discover my own gifts, to bless you and others when offering myself to you in him, In such koinonia we can become the liberating and liberated sons of God.⁹

⁸Lyman Coleman, Faith at Work Magazine, Vol. LXXXVIII (September, 1975).

⁹Ibid.

When Faith at Work groups speak of being Christian-centered and koinonia, they refer not just to learning or to person-to-person encounter. They speak of the presence of the Spirit. Martin Buber tried to describe what happens to a man when he encounters God personally. He says, 'Man receives and receives not a specific content, but a presence, a presence as power.'¹⁰ The Faith at Work groups endeavor to achieve this sense of presence. Therefore, there is another dimension than one finds in ordinary therapy groups.

The author, in his thirteen weeks of working with groups on this basis, discovered this to be true. If a group were opened and closed by prayer, there was a feeling we were not meeting just as separate people together to help one another, but that we were in a spiritual fellowship. On many occasions there was this sense of presence of which Buber spoke.

There is, in the Faith at Work movement, the conviction that groups are incomplete unless there is this dimension. People not only have a need for each other, but they have a need for God. One of the basic tenets of the Faith at Work movement is that there is a built-in instinctive need for God. As Augustine described this universal dependency in Christian terms, he said, 'Thou made us for thyself and our heart is restless until it repose in thee.'¹¹

¹⁰Martin Buber, I and Thou (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), p. 110.

¹¹Augustine, The Confessions (New York: Dutton, 1951), p. 1.

Figure I (page 90 of this project) will help in understanding the group dynamics in the Faith at Work movement. This figure was sketched by the author.

A further factor in the dynamics of the Faith at Work groups is the emphasis on confession. Though this relates very closely to what has already been said about vulnerability and openness, the part confession plays in the groups needs to be elaborated. Many people are secretly afraid that someone is going to find them out. The result is that they become guarded and their anxiety increases as there is a dread of exposure. Soon such a closed person finds it difficult to relate even to members of his own family; and he looks upon every person as a threat. Men like Hobart and Mowrer have developed a new psychology that believes two paths are available for a closed and alienated person:

He can reveal his real self and become an open person, or he can start believing his own lies and begin more completely to inhabit his unreal world. The second alternative often leads to the neurotic and to the typical syndromes of schizophrenia. The world of delusions and hallucinations becomes a real world, and the world of reality becomes unreal.¹²

The person who refuses to open up his life through some sort of confession tends to be living a lie. He projects an image that is not his true self, and he is putting up defenses so that no one will know who he is. This living a lie has serious consequences in the body. In

¹²Miller and Larson, p. 72.

MODEL OF FAITH AT WORK GROUPS

(AS OBVIOUS THE DIAGRAM IS IN
THE SHAPE OF A BASEBALL DIAMOND)

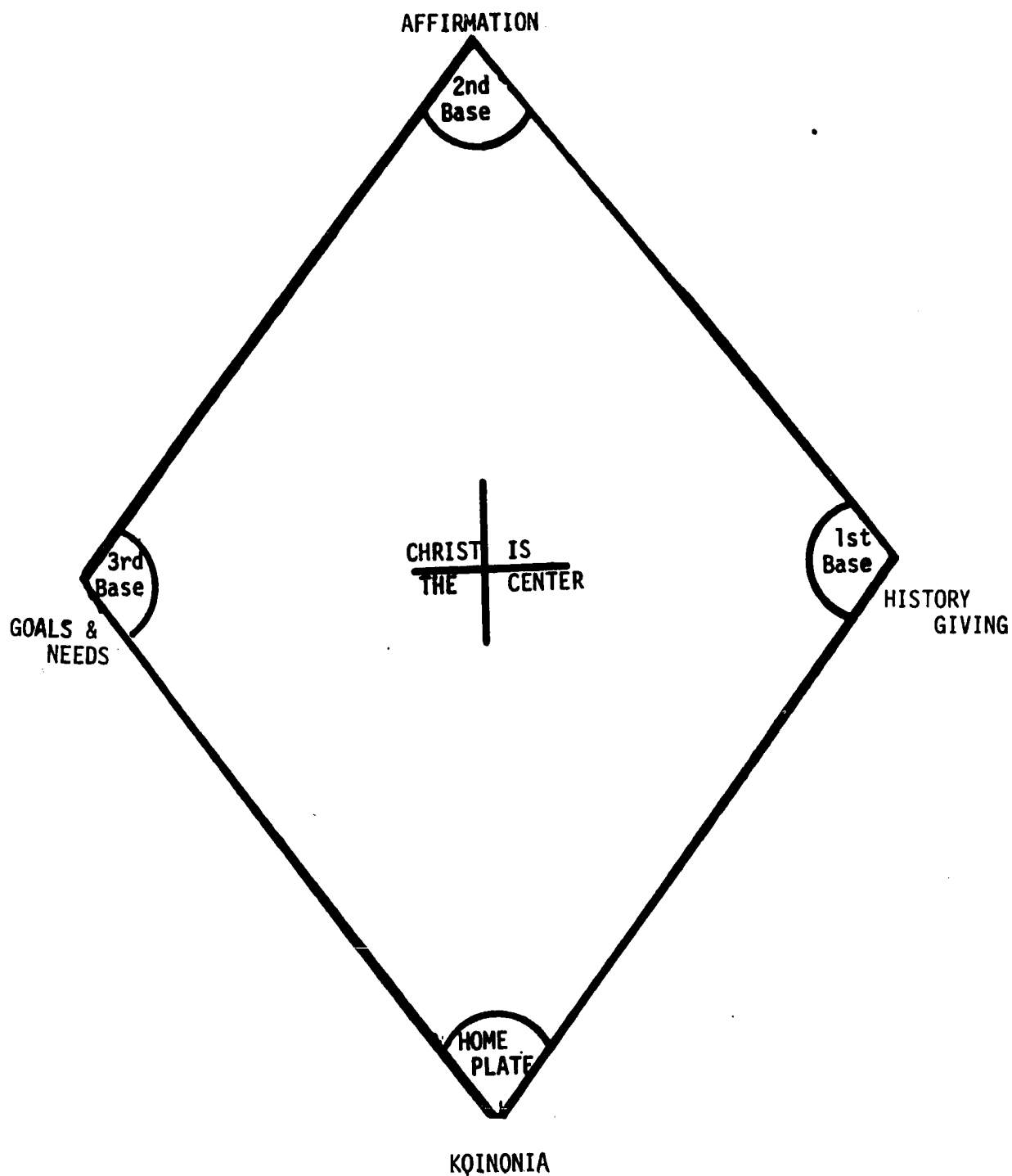


FIGURE I

one group led by William Schultz, an experiment was carried out, using psycho-drama as a technique. The group broke up into heterosexual pairs. They were instructed to role-play an imaginary situation in which they were married and in which the husband, unknown to his wife, was having an affair with his secretary. They were to act out a home-coming dialogue between the husband and wife, during which the secret was not to be divulged. Later the roles were reversed so that it was the wife who had to cover up through conversation. At the end of the two role-playing situations, Schultz asked for feedbacks. Without exception, everyone had experienced a growing sense of pain or discomfort. Sometimes it was a pain in the pit of the stomach; others felt their sinuses tighten or throats constricting. Still others felt their voices becoming strained. There were all kinds of physical symptoms. This tended to prove that a lie cannot be lived without its being reflected in the body. This is what psychosomatic medicine has been saying for a long time.

The Faith at Work movement thinks there should be groups where honest confession can be allowed and even encouraged for the sake of one's health. There has recently been much investigation of the damaging effects of distress. Physicians and psychologists have been talking about stress as a factor in physical ailments. Physical stress is not necessarily harmful; what is harmful is distress which comes from inner conflict, a lack of unity, and one's feeling that his life is a constant cover-up. Confession becomes a means of therapy for the person in this

kind of distress. Not only does it assist one to regain some physical vitality, but it brings him into a greater sense of reality. William James' statement is still true:

For him who confesses, shams are over and realities have begun; he has exteriorized his rottenness. If he has not actually got rid of it, he at least no longer smears it over with a hypocritical show of virtue--he lives at least on the basis of veracity.¹³

Realizing the kind of pain and pressures, and the damage that is done when one lives with too much bottled up within himself, the group dynamics of the Faith at Work movement has confession as a keystone part of any healing therapy. Sometimes this honesty in confession is not achieved quickly. The group must meet long enough to achieve mutual trust. Keith Miller warns against trying to have instant total honesty. Therefore, the movement toward confession should be slow and within an atmosphere of kindness. This can be done, as stated before, only where the group itself creates an atmosphere in which feelings can be expressed safely. It is only then that one is able to move deeper into his own life and bring out the threatening material that has harrassed him for so long. In one of the study books for the groups, this is clearly stated:

Ideally, I believe the fellowship of believers should eventually become open enough that total personal confession could take place,

¹³William James, The Variety of Religious Experience (New York: Random House, 1929), pp. 452-453.

either privately with any other member or publicly in the group, as was the case in the early church.¹⁴

This kind of atmosphere is so different from our world where there are pretensions and fronts and images. Confessional groups are a radical departure from the usual kind of atmosphere in which one lives. The Faith at Work movement believes that unless the church achieves a confessional community, it will not be able to heal.

The author worked thirteen weeks with a group, using the dynamics of the Faith at Work movement. He feels the key factor in achieving effectiveness is affirmation. There was no genuine confession until there were hours spent within the group where the members were affirmed individually. Within the thirteen-week period, it was only in the last few weeks that the people were getting down to what can best be described as "gut-level feeling." This happened only when there had been established an affirmation of each individual as a person of worth. Some of the "I'm OK--You're OK" psychology came into play in the earlier meetings.

In the small groups, after everyone had expressed what he felt needed to be ventillated, the groups always ended on a very positive note. As a minister sitting with laymen and other ministers within a group of about eight people, the author found an unusual kind of spirit

¹⁴ Miller and Larson, p. 82.

being generated within the group. Within a very short period there was a mutual sense of caring. As a professional clergyman, one receives compliments every week that are not taken too seriously; but in a group situation where you allow others to know you and then there is affirmation, the effect is altogether different. The groups ended each session by members saying three things they particularly liked about each of the other persons. Exposing some of his own deeper emotions and having people affirm him, was a very moving experience for the author. The dynamics of affirmation brings the lonely and the alienated into the true spirit of inclusion, and some of the alienation is broken through.

The Faith at Work movement recognizes how desperately persons need to be affirmed. Reul Howe has said, "Our life situation is one in which we are always seeking affirmation, and if we do not receive it, we try to provide it for ourselves."¹⁵ Sometimes when we try to provide our own affirmation, we try to force it or use bazaar methods to achieve it. This often has a reverse effect. Affirmation is a free gift; it comes from people who care, and it is precisely at this point that the groups find the greatest dynamic. They are caring groups, and thus caring, they affirm.

This need for affirmation is reflected clearly in the person-to-person dialogue within the group. People are usually more sensitive to

¹⁵Reul Howe, The Miracle of Dialogue (New York: Seabury Press, 1963), p. 84.

what is wrong in them than what is right. There were many people within the group who had wonderful qualities but found it difficult to think good thoughts about themselves. One exercise that is used is:

Take a piece of notebook paper and jot down five words which symbolize for you five different qualities or characteristics which you do not like about yourself and which you wish were different. Time yourself to see how long it takes to do this.

Then on another piece of paper, write down five words which symbolize five qualities or characteristics which are your strengths. Time yourselves in writing these five words. Which took longer?¹⁶

Groups using this approach discovered that most members will list their negatives within forty seconds, and almost no one takes more than a minute. On the other hand, trying to list their positives takes at least a minute and a half, and two minutes is not unusual. What is wrong with us immediately comes to mind. We often have to search to find what is right about us.

Is the Faith at Work movement trying to correct something radically wrong in the way that Christian faith is being preached? A person often thinks it is wrong to think well of oneself. Many people reared in evangelical churches think this is a sign of pride. The Faith at Work movement is trying to tell us to think positively about ourselves, to accept our strengths as they really are, and to give praise to God who created these qualities. "To affirm the high quality of a product is to offer exquisite praise to the manufacturer!"¹⁷ Figure II is a

¹⁶Larson and Osborne, p. 68.

¹⁷Ibid.

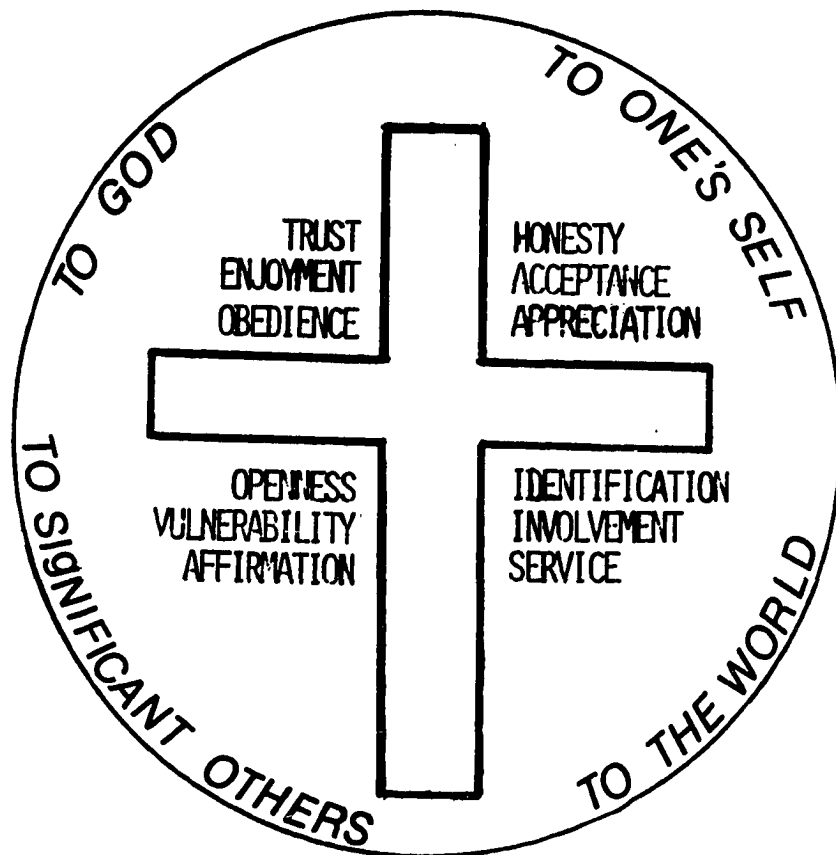
model of what a group should be according to the Faith at Work movement, and in it is seen the strong place of affirmation.¹⁸

In the thirteen weeks of the group experiment held at First United Methodist Church in San Diego, there had to be some guidelines. The group turned to the Faith at Work movement as a basis from which to work. These were mostly practical guidelines. Each member was asked to list the priorities of the group. Confidentiality was emphasized. This established an atmosphere of freedom for people to open their minds and hearts. Since it was a noon meeting, it was necessary to start and stop on time. This allowed business people to leave their work for an hour and a half and know that the time commitment would be honored. There was no insistence upon anyone having to participate in any way. Each person could choose to respond or not to respond, or to pray aloud or not to pray. There was no coaxing or demanding of any particular behavior. The agenda emerged out of the study books being used.

The agenda was changed from time to time, according to the needs of the group; but in each section there were three group experiences that were always included. First, there was prayer. When the large group broke up into smaller groupings, everyone in the group was invited to pray audibly. If one did not choose to pray audibly, he kept silent or would say, "Thank you, God." Second, study was always a part of the

¹⁸Ibid., p. 38.

THE KINGDOM OF RIGHT RELATIONSHIPS



agenda. There were assignments to be read and to be reviewed; and the groups reflected upon the study material. Third, sharing was always a part of the agenda. Always there was the honest opening of the struggles and celebrations and joys that are common to all humans.

Before the author presents the responses of the group itself, there are some observations that are pertinent. After the thirteen weeks were completed, members of the group wanted to continue. If they could not continue immediately, they wanted to start a new group as soon as possible. (At this writing) another thirteen-week course is being planned to start in the spring of 1976. People who had not known each other before, found that in a relatively few weeks there were friends who cared and loved. In one session this was the primary item of discussion. It is often felt that only relatives or friends one has known for a long time can care deeply. The amazing thing about the group was that in a short period of time, persons who had never met were praying for one another, caring for one another, and sharing with one another. As one doctor in the group expressed it, "I could not have believed this unless I had been a part of it." We often look at people with an alienated eye; we are sure we are alone, and there is no one around who cares. The people in this group were surprised to find that deep caring was generated and that it flowed from one life to another. Included in the group were: a lobbyist in Sacramento for the San Diego school system, a physician, an insurance broker, a retired school superintendent, a physician's wife, the wife of an executive (going through a very painful divorce), a young woman of

twenty-two who had just lost her parents in an air crash, a black woman who had been a community leader and had held significant positions in many of San Diego's service organizations (recently dismissed from her work and crushed by the experience), a woman whose husband was a top city executive and wanted help in dealing with his retirement which was to begin soon. This is a cross-section of the people involved. Two ministers worked with the group--the author as senior minister of First United Methodist Church, and Dr. Edward Hansen, the Minister of Education. Beyond the hours spent in the classroom, there were countless hours spent with individuals who wanted further private consultations with the ministers. The group was asked to write out their reactions, how they felt, and what changes occurred in their own lives during the thirteen weeks. Following are some samplings:

You asked us to give you a report on the influence that the course "Edge of Adventure", has had in our lives. Frankly I feel that it has been the most helpful experience that I have had in over sixty years of church membership. These last twelve weeks have been of real help in assisting me to identify and then apply some corrective thinking and praying to some of the tensions and problems that were bothering me.

I think that the very evident success of this class is largely due to the frank way in which Keith Miller and Bruce Larson discussed their own problems, and the admission by both you and Ed that pastors also need help in this area. This encouraged all of us to really pour out our own tensions in the discussion groups.

In my group each one of us had very real problems which we all feel were definitely helped by the method of group therapy which the class provided. Personally, I was helped not only in the solution of some annoying tensions, but also in striving for a higher level of Christian living.

I am pleased to know that you plan to continue this type of study, and want you to know how much I appreciate your splendid leadership in our church.

Most of my life I've been searching for a closer walk with God, but because I felt I had to be perfect to attain that walk, I have not achieved it in spite of being brought up in the church, teaching Church School, and singing in the choir. Even my "conversion" quickly lost its glow.

The Experiment has brought me to the realization that I needn't be perfect in order to be a Christian, that God accepts me as I am and is able to use me as I am, including all my faults. The class has also been valuable because of the friendships I've formed, particularly in the small group. Our group seemed to plunge into a deep relationship from the start and to maintain the closeness. I'm looking forward to continuing to study and to relate to them.

Because I have felt more accepted with my imperfections, I have been able to step out more confidently in all my relationships, not because I am more competent but because I am not so afraid of failure. Because I can risk more, family relationships have improved. I have become more accepting of the other members of the family. Thanks for making the class possible for me.

Trying to evaluate our session in "An Experiment in Faith" is surprisingly very difficult.

Our group attempted to follow the readings and manual, but they became merely a springboard to our personal involvement with one another. The deep insights I received were amazing, painful, and invaluable.

Experimenting with "trying to live as I believe" has been a truly beautiful experience. I would have felt uncomfortable trying this before, but now it is as easy as "putting on a happy face."

I came to the classes because I was in a very depressed state of mind. My husband and I were having some serious financial worries. This in turn was causing us to be constantly picking at each other. I had a perpetual "get-off-my-back" attitude toward him and I can't say I was a "thing of beauty and a joy forever" for him. Shortly after I started the class, sales started picking up for him and as our worries eased, we were easier on each other.

Faith workshop was a growing experience for me. It provided the basis for an uncompromising understanding of myself.

The Bible has taken on a different meaning. It is not just the sacred book filled with sacred writings. It is present help with the problems of today. More than ever it guides, and gives us a challenge, in the now.

As I left our class each week I had a feeling of calmness, happiness and well being. I felt uplifted because I had been in a Christian atmosphere with new friends who were willing to face the

real problems of life.

I have come to realize that I am loved by God even if I have acted or reacted in a wrong or unkind manner. That I can try again and don't have to have guilt feelings.

The past thirteen weeks have been a very rich and rewarding experience for me.

To me, it was so outstanding that four strangers could open up, and talk freely about our failures, frustrations, hopes and dreams. I have discovered many quirks about myself, not very nice ones, either. Such as not accepting as an equal, human beings not as fortunate as I. Hopefully the compassion that I am now able to feel for others, will make me a better Christian.

As you know I was (still am) going thru a very traumatic time in my life--bankruptcy which was forced because of pending divorce proceedings. Thus, this series aided me in keeping my sanity and in touch with people who cared for me.

I found this experience to be therapeutic in two ways. One, because I learned that I could freely vent my feelings and still feel accepted, and understood. And secondly, I was able to get on a "peak feeling level" (even during my situation) with the other members of my group. When I had this experience I felt a sense of me being supportive and giving strength to them even tho at the same time I was "hurting."

When I entered this experiment in Faith, I was depressed, had a sense of futility, and hopelessness. It seemed that I had more than my share of problems, disappointments and failures. The environmental situation has not changed, but I have.

From this experience I have learned that I can fail and not be a failure, that I do not have to be a perfect Christian to be loved by my heavenly father; I have developed "some" insights around my own impatience in wanting solutions to life's problems.

Of equal importance is the therapeutic effect of the group experience. The open, sincere, honest communication served as a vehicle for the forming of meaningful relationships. To be the recipient of love, understanding, and faith in me as a person, was a salient factor in the spiritual growth I experienced.

There were several important factors which I felt contributed to making our weekly meetings in "Experiment in Faith" successful and meaningful.

To me, the primary one dealt with being able to express one's self honestly and unhesitatingly without the fear that our confidences would be violated. This had a twofold result: it allowed

the person expressing his thoughts to feel accepted as a part of a unique fellowship and it helped the listener to be more receptive to his own thoughts and feelings and thereby more readily able to voice his own thoughts.

The second factor is one that I mentioned above--the participation in a unique fellowship of people; a feeling of oneness or part of. To be concerned for each other, pray for each other and to be so excited with the spirit that one is disappointed when unable to come.

The third is one's reaffirmation of faith. The group has been a constant stimulant for helping me to reaffirm my faith. Stimulant, I think, is a good word to describe its effect. It lessens the "backsliding" and promotes the initiative for change.

I have waited some time since being asked to comment on my experience with the Adventure in Faith series. This should have been done right away but I put it off and with the holidays, enough time or the right time was hard to find.

In the beginning I was quite excited. This was just what I needed, but not until near the end did I realize something was missing. In the group set-up, my group members were all at about the same level of growth with none of us capable of being strong and supportive for the others. For the last couple of meetings I had a chance to be in another group and drew so very much from everyone. Also in my new awakening I felt strong toward the others.

I am looking forward to a new program. However, I hope to be with a group which has members with stronger commitments and at a higher level of growth than myself.¹⁹

19

This particular response indicates some of the imbalance of the groups.

CHAPTER VII

THEOLOGY--POLARITY OR WHOLENESS

The Faith at Work movement has been criticized by some as having no definite theology. A hasty judgment might be that the movement does not feel that theology is all-important. The author believes that this latter view must be analyzed. It seems at times that the Faith at Work movement does not believe the renewal of the church will come through theology. The first Christians did not have theological orthodoxy in the sense of neatly formulated systems of thought. Even modern scholars agree that there are many theologies within the New Testament. Underneath the variations there is a common faith. After all these years, no one has been able to work out in clear theological systems all the implications that lie in the New Testament faith.

It is the thinking of the author that the Faith at Work movement has the attitude that theological systems are not necessary for faith. It would be difficult for us to label clearly what the theology of the Faith at Work movement is. Harold DeWolf wrote:

Theologizing by the use of labels designating polemic stereotypes is especially unlikely to aid in the search for truth. Moreover, the dependence upon school labels, even when carefully designed, is perilous and sterile.¹

¹L. Harold DeWolf, The Case For Theology in Liberal Perspective (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1959), p. 13.

J. J. Lambert, writing in Faith at Work, points out that even though that part of the body of Christ which seeks to respond in obedience under the name of Faith at Work is a highly diverse and far-scattered company, there are some important beliefs which its adherents hold in common. Unlike our many and sundry denominations, Faith at Work is not a confessional body, and there are no admission standards.² The Faith at Work movement welcomes people from different theological perspectives. It endeavors to find a common faith beyond theological differences. There is the attitude that all labels are libels. There is some injustice in putting a person into a definite theological school of thought, thereby reducing the possibility of real communication.

Faith at Work maintains an openness toward all sorts of theological systems, and the author feels that this is one of the weaknesses of the movement. The movement has not exerted enough effort to determine what its theological base is. Their position is that the church has more important things to do than to spend time with theological dogmatism. The author believes, however, that the movement will finally "run shallow" if its theology is not adequate. One person said, "I love religion but I hate theology." Somewhere serious thought has to be given to the theological presuppositions underlying this movement.

²J. J. Lambert, Faith at Work Magazine, (June 1975).

The question that has to be asked is, "Does the Faith at Work movement have any kind of theology?" It has already been stated that they are not a confessional body. Elton Trueblood, in a personal letter to the author, stated that the movement is trying to be the "dynamic middle." That is, it is trying to take the middle road between liberalism and conservatism. This point was not elaborated on in the letter, but the author has discussed some aspects of this in Chapter VI. In a Staff Position paper presented by the Faith at Work Staff at the installation of Bruce MacDougall as Executive Director of Faith at Work (Canada, November 29, 1972), it was stated:

Faith at Work does not claim a theology of its own. It assumes the Christian faith that is expressed in the great classical creeds of the Church.³ However, since we are not a church, but a servant of the church, we encourage those of the FAITH AT WORK fellowship to be faithful to their own traditions in matters of interpretation of theology, doctrine, and church order.⁴ Our emphasis is more upon what we have seen and experienced in our own lives of the power of God's redeeming love in Christ.⁵

The following statements from this paper come closest to stating the theological beliefs of the movement:

We have come to know and praise God as OUR FATHER who has created us in His own image and who has called into being this fellowship known by the name of FAITH AT WORK.

We have come to understand and accept God also as THE SON in Christ Jesus whom we acknowledge as both Saviour and Lord. In the life,

³This is a concession to traditionalism.

⁴This is a concession to liberalism.

⁵(Basic "existentialist" position).

death, and resurrection of Christ Jesus, we have encountered and gratefully accept the amazing and awesome love and forgiveness of God.

We have also come to experience and respond to God, THE HOLY SPIRIT who alone enables us to accept God's love and to fulfill the ministry to which we have been called, both individually and corporately.

These points were stated in another staff paper in this way:

1. The marvelous works of God in all the ages past;
2. The love of God, revealed in Jesus Christ, in the "right now";
3. The assured hope for all the tomorrows that God will continue to be God over all His creation.⁶

So we see that systematic theological concerns have not been a part of the Faith at Work movement. The feeling prevails that theology is not a way to bring about unity.

In other words, we have discovered that when we are dealing with life and real life situations, unity happens as a natural by-product. When we deal with abstract concepts and doctrinal truths apart from life, we will invariably separate and divide over our definitions. Only in the realm of experience can we be one together!⁷

This latter quote picks up the anti-intellectualism of existentialism. It infers that clear thinking is devious, which is not always true. In fact, the entire quotation smacks of the philosophy of existentialism which is not readily acknowledged by the Faith at Work people. This statement also helps in understanding where the Faith at

⁶Ralph Osborne, "The Unique Opportunity of Faith at Work" (Staff Paper, presented at the installation of Bruce MacDougall as Executive Director, Faith at Work, Canada, November 29, 1972), p. 2.

⁷Ibid., p. 4.

Work movement stands theologically. They do not think of their life style in abstract terms. If they are to know anything, they must know it personally. Hence, they do not try to define it, but only witness to it as Christians long ago witnessed to the incarnation. The Scripture says, "We write to you about the word of life which existed from the beginning: we have heard it and we have seen it with our eyes; yes, we have seen it and our hands have touched it."⁸

The assumption is that the movement falls within the boundaries of an orthodox theology. By orthodoxy is meant that form of Christianity which won the support of the overwhelming majority of Christians through the ages, and which is expressed by the official proclamations or creeds of Christian groups. The Faith at Work movement has no serious argument with the orthodox statements. However, what they are saying goes beyond the bounds of orthodoxy, and picks up other theological traditions. It is the author's opinion that they come closer to a modern orthodoxy than to a traditional orthodoxy. It is also his opinion that they become eclectic in their theological ideas; and there is no systematic theology which they acknowledge.

There is need to clarify where some of the movement's ideas have roots. It is beyond the scope of this paper to go into depth concerning the different theological schools that are prevailing now. But some

⁸I John 1:1

short definitive statement must be made about the theological positions of the movement in order to try to determine if the emphasis lies mostly within a modern orthodox structure.

It is clear that the Faith at Work movement rejects Fundamentalism. Fundamentalism was a revolt against liberal accommodation to modern culture. Its leaders were determined to return to the Bible; and they stood defiant to modern ways of thinking. The Faith at Work movement does not look at the Bible literally. It does not have an unreasoning dogmatism that is peculiar to the fundamentalist movement. It believes the Bible is a revelation; but it does not believe it is a total revelation of God. They do look to events of the present as experiences of God. The author thinks it is right to say they seem to believe that the revelation from the Bible takes place in life's experiences. Many of the movement's writers are looking to modern psychology for assistance and understanding of the human situation. They do not accept the belief that there was a time when God spoke directly to men through the Scriptures. The Faith at Work movement is strong in believing that God speaks in many other ways, as has been indicated earlier in this paper.

Although the Faith at Work movement has a fundamental ring at times, the author believes that its ideas are not rooted in any rigid fundamentalism as we understand that theological stance. The similarity of the Faith at Work movement with fundamentalism, is its emphasis on commitment, its feeling of certainty that God can be real to the individual, and the power of the conversion experience. But theologically

there is a real divergence from Fundamentalism in that there is no doctrinal rigidity.

There is an accomodation to culture. We see some of the movement's ideas rooted in liberalism. As has been indicated earlier, the movement believes that revelation is continuous. The concept of man is that he is a creature who has some capacity to receive the word of God. When we say the Bible finds us, there is the assumption that we already have in us some knowledge of God, and what we find in the Bible matches this. It is evident that one should look for inspiration beyond the Bible. God has spoken, but he does not cease to speak. It is the inference of many of the Faith at Work writers that new light may break forth at any time, and is breaking forth wherever people are receptive to God's word. Part of the optimism of the movement parallels the optimism of liberalism, that God may speak to men in ways of which we have not dreamed. There does not appear to be any Biblical isolationism in regard to the whole idea of revelation.

While there are strains of liberalism in the Faith at Work movement, it has little to say about Biblical criticism. This is necessary to the understanding of the Bible. The Faith at Work movement seems to avoid this issue. The movement may take this position because it wants to take the "middle of the road" position; and the conservatives would be terribly upset if there were great importance put upon Biblical criticism. However, it is not correct to assume that Biblical criticism is an intellectual approach and therefore is divisive.

The movement is different from liberalism in regard to the social gospel emphasis, also. Liberalism has said that, to a great degree, man is molded by a society, and if society is corrupt, it will inevitably corrupt man. The Faith at Work movement puts more emphasis upon man's responsibility individually. As previously stated, the movement takes the position that the changing of personal lives is more important than speaking of social evils. In this sense, it draws toward the middle of the road in the personal change--social change controversy.

The Faith at Work movement departs from neo-orthodoxy at many points, particularly when it comes to total depravity, the concept that man has no ability to receive the revelation, and that it is entirely the act of God. Barth, who was one of the strong voices of neo-orthodoxy, says that God cannot be an object of our knowledge; he is eternally the subject who is known only when and where he chooses to speak. God has not spoken in nature or history, but only in Jesus Christ; and because of man's sin, neither his knowledge nor his power can take him to God. God must come to man. God must always have the initiative. But in the Faith at Work movement, one finds the attitude of seeking, of questing, of studying, and of fellowship as a means of understanding the way of God with men. The movement would agree with Barth that God is an objective reality, but God is known through events that confront us in this world. Something happens to a human soul when one seeks to know. The Faith at Work movement does put some importance on man's initiative, not just on God's initiative.

When it comes to natural theology, you would find some parallel truths. Lord Gifford specified in the provisions for the Gifford lectures: "Natural theology must be developed without reference to or reliance upon any supposed exceptional or so-called miraculous revelation."⁹ For the natural theologian, the gaining of truth about God or man comes from many sources independent of Biblical revelation. Theology must participate in truth-seeking efforts with other sciences. The Christian must be humble enough to approach other disciplines with the idea that there is something to learn from them and that their insights are constructive for the whole human enterprise. Thus, the natural theologian is willing to cooperate in the intellectual task with psychology, sociology, history, medicine, political science, and other sciences.

Many of the Faith at Work writings draw on these resources. There are many quotes from psychology and sociology, medicine, and other sciences. Natural theology implies a denial of man's depravity. These theologians believe man has within himself attributes which enable him to receive the saving word from God and from the world that God has made.¹⁰ The Faith at Work movement, however, would not be willing to reduce its theology to natural theology. It would not em-

⁹DeWolf, p. 18.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 22.

brace pantheism where God is all that is, nor would it accept natural theology if it meant that miraculous revelations were not possible.

The Faith at Work movement contains some strains of the Theology of Hope, as has already been indicated. There is no evidence that there is any clear understanding of the depth of the Theology of Hope, and yet there is constantly the optimism about the future. This is found especially in the Faith at Work movement's emphasis upon the healing of the past and the opening up of the future, so that a person can be freed from the bondage of the past. This means that the movement accepts values that are known in the present. This is somewhat different from the Theology of Hope.

In the book God and the World, John Cobb writes:

One experiences guilt, not in recognition that his acts are in conflict with past laws or socially approved patterns, but in the recognition that his bondage to the past and conformity to human expectations have inhibited his response to new possibilities of growth and service.¹¹

The movement would be in agreement that one must be free from the bondage of the past. But Cobb is saying that even present values are inadequate, and there are values that we do not yet know to which we are called. This emphasis is not clearly stated in the Faith at Work movement.

Cobb further states:

That means that the Creator-Lord of history is not the all-deter-

¹¹John B. Cobb, Jr., God and the World (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1959), p. 62.

minative cause of the course of natural and historical events, but a lover of the world who calls it ever beyond what it has attained by affirming life, novelty, consciousness, and freedom again and again.¹²

This seems to be different from the hope of the future in what has already been revealed. In the Faith at Work movement the coming of the Kingdom is achieved through the realization of what has already been revealed. The author sees a different emphasis in the Theology of Hope because in this theology the hope rises out of that which has not yet been fully revealed.

In the Faith at Work movement, the message comes loud and clear of what God can do for the human individual. Total commitment to God is described in terms of what happens to the person who makes the commitment. Cobb has a little different emphasis, for he says:

The Christian loves God finally not as an instrument to human good but for what God is in himself, and that love can make possible the endurance of the terrors of history even when there seems to be no hope for man.¹³

This discussion has presented some of the theological spectrum from which the Faith at Work draws. This is not a self-conscious effort on its part. The theological concepts are drawn from a cross-section of theological ideas. The movement does not stay within the boundaries of any one theological system.

¹²Ibid., p. 65.

¹³Ibid., p. 97.

However, if we were forced to say to what theological school the Faith at Work movement relates most closely, the answer would be that it is a Modern Orthodoxy. In seeking the middle-of-the-road position, modern orthodoxy is willing to accept the belief that many people have some knowledge of God without having any knowledge of Jesus Christ. This capacity is the residue of the imago Dei given by God's creative grace. Although man may possess this knowledge, the true saving word comes through Jesus Christ. In modern orthodoxy, then, there is an effort to find a place between extremes. William Hordern in A Layman's Guide to Protestant Theology states: "Perhaps the best description (of Modern Orthodoxy) would be to say that they accept orthodoxy as a growing tradition."¹⁴ This allows for some experimentation.

The Faith at Work movement is not boxed into any one system. Hordern believes that modern orthodoxy is true to Protestantism in that nothing is solidified in such a way that there are not possible some growing edges. "To Protestantism only God is holy, and no church, no doctrine, no saint, no institution, no rite, is holy in itself."¹⁵ Christianity was never meant to be a system of rules or thought, but at the heart of it is a dedication to a person. In this way there can be no fixed way of life, but there can be a continually growing tradition.

¹⁴William Hordern, A Layman's Guide to Protestant Theology (New York: Macmillan, 1961), p. 185.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 173

The Faith at Work movement does not want to be captured by conservatism on one hand, or by liberalism on the other hand. It wants to stay in the dynamic middle.

Again we find that modern orthodoxy is a mediation between other theologies. It has renounced the optimism of the liberal social gospel. It does not believe that any one social organization can be considered the Christian society or solution... On the other hand it is more hopeful than Barthianism that real advances can be made in the social life of man.¹⁶

The Faith at Work movement believes that there is hope for a better, though not perfect, society upon this earth. The movement tries to be the middle way, a theology which finds truth on both sides, and which, in some cases, is acceptable to the conservatives, and in other cases, to the liberals. The one point where Faith at Work would be strong in its affirmation of what modern orthodoxy is saying, is that the primary aspect of revelation is through Jesus Christ. The revelation is not just his teachings or his acts, but himself. What God reveals in Jesus Christ is himself. There is a strong optimistic faith that God will reveal his own being and nature to man. The supreme revelation is given in the life and person of Jesus.

At the Festival of Hope Conference in February, 1974, Elton Trueblood gave the major speech. He presented the idea that the Festival of Hope movement (which is close to the Faith at Work movement) should have a vision of wholeness, the middle way, or the balanced life. He spoke of

¹⁶Ibid., p. 208.

emotion versus reason. He said, "Each alone is damaging. We're called to love and to think, but if there were an emphasis, it should be on reason." He spoke of laughter, and tears, of the humor in Jesus' statements in the gospel, and further said, "If there is a choice between laughter and tears, the Gospel is on the side of tears." He spoke of the old and the new, and that there is no question of the need to understand the contemporary scene, but that the safest position is with the old, where there are long years of traditional resources. He spoke of the journey inward versus the journey outward, in which the journey outward was the social concerns, and the journey inward was devotion.

Trueblood stated (as the author has previously written) that there should not be a serious polarization, but if there has to be a choice, it should be the journey inward. He spoke of humanity versus the divine, and made it clear that we must not disguise the humanity of Jesus. He stated that the great weakness of the Church is that we have failed to proclaim the divinity of Jesus. (According to C. S. Lewis, "If Jesus was only a teacher, he was a false teacher, for he claimed to be more. He claimed to be the revelation of God.") The emphasis must be on the divine.¹⁷ The author believes that Trueblood over-simplifies,

¹⁷ Elton Trueblood, An Address at the Festival of Hope Conference, Anaheim, California, February 1, 1974.

but he is saying that these concepts need to be kept in healthy tension. There is no doubt in the author's mind that the Faith at Work movement is leaning theologically toward the conservative side.

Faith at Work, then, is not a theological movement, but it has some theological roots and ideas. It takes the stand that theologizing by the use of labels is unlikely to aid in the search for truth. But the movement should carry on some serious theological reflection; for how a man thinks affects every avenue of his actions. The author would agree with Harold DeWolf, "Not irrational faith or faithless reason is the need of the hour, but reasonable faith and faith-filled reason."¹⁸ Trueblood would respond to this by saying:

The new Christian man, who can give leadership for the new day, is the one who, without even a hint of contradiction, can enjoy studying the works of Aristotle and, on the same day, appreciate singing "Jesus, Lover of My Soul." The worst mark of confusion is the prejudice that a man cannot do both. Those who demonstrate, without apology or undue self-consciousness, that they can do both, will be respected and followed. They will be able to make something of the impact upon our time that William Temple made upon his, when his characteristic titles were Christus Veritas and Mens Creatrix.¹⁹

The Faith at Work movement would respond to this by saying that if theological correctness is made an end in itself, it becomes a serious block to the living God; and there is a dangerous pride in anyone assuming he has the correct theology. The most important thing is the

¹⁸DeWolf, p. 45.

¹⁹Elton Trueblood, The New Man For Our Time (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p. 39.

recognition of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The author believes that though this may be an important point, it should not discourage us from constantly re-examining our theological base and its relevance to the world in which we live. It is the author's position that all the tools of our age, from science to new understanding of language, should be used to help us clarify the gospel once delivered to the Saints.

CHAPTER VIII

EVALUATION

In evaluating the Faith at Work movement, the author turned to two sources. One was a personal interview with Dr. Lloyd Ogilvie, the senior minister of The First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood, California. Dr. Ogilvie was a valuable resource person because he was part of the Faith at Work movement early in its history. He served on its Board for many years and was its chairman during many transitional periods. The other resource is the author's own observation and analysis of the Faith at Work movement. In each of the preceding chapters some evaluative material was provided. The author brings his own critique into focus in this last chapter.

One of the glaring weaknesses in the Faith at Work movement is that there is no serious exegetical scholar. At this point, there appears to be no real interest in scholarly research. The movement avoids the rigid literalism of fundamentalism. It also avoids demythologizing the Scriptures, as presented in Bultmann's approach. Whether this is conscious or unconscious is not certain. It may be an effort to be in the middle, where the movement would not antagonize any group in regard to Biblical understanding.

There is, however, emphasis in the movement upon the layman's reading of the Scriptures. In the Faith at Work magazine there is

usually a commentary on certain passages of Scripture. These commentaries are the passages that can be personally helpful. The interpretation given is what might be considered the obvious meaning in traditional terms. For instance, when the resurrection of Jesus is presented, it is interpreted in the traditional ways of Christian understanding: as a Christ who is crucified, buried, and risen. To try to demythologize the resurrection would not serve the interests of the Faith at Work movement. This might create a serious division.

Since Faith at Work has no deep exegetical interest, it presents an understanding of the Bible that is simple and uncomplicated. The reader is often told that if he will read the Bible, the Spirit will awaken his mind as to how the Scriptures can speak to his own life. It must be remembered that this is a lay movement. To introduce cause for doubt that a particular Scripture passage may not be the words of Jesus or the words of Paul, or may not belong in the New Testament, might create questions which laymen could not deal with adequately in the beginning stages of their Christian lives. This may be underrating the lay people. It is the author's experience that they often can deal adequately with questions of truth, provided they are informed and the subject is handled with sincerity and respect. If there is hypocrisy and deception, many could later experience disapproval and feel cheated.

In the interview, Dr. Ogilvie stated: "One of the major emphases of the Faith at Work movement is helping people start the Christian life

and discover their ministry, and Faith at Work has not been able to investigate the exegetical problems in depth."¹ This lack of exegetical interest in depth may keep out of the movement large segments of people who want to go beyond the apparent meaning of the Scriptures and want to seek the insights that the scholars can provide with their knowledge of original sources and historical settings.

The Faith at Work movement is naive in not taking more seriously systemic evil. This is not dismissed in the Faith at Work movement, but it does not have the significance that should be found in any religious movement. A strong aspect of the Faith at Work movement is its emphasis on the belief that humans do not have to be pawns of their social environments. We can be choosers; we can be deciders, and there can be personal direction. This is needed in a world where too many people feel they are controlled by structures and systems. However, one of the reasons that people feel like pawns and have feelings of helplessness, is the fact that systems and social forces do have overwhelming power in our society.

As a corrective to the emphasis on individuality, there needs to be a consideration of what the Marxists are saying. This would keep the movement from over-simplification in understanding social forces.

¹Interview with Dr. Lloyd Ogilvie, Hollywood, California, February 5, 1976.

The criticism of religion ends with the doctrine that man is the highest being for man, hence with the categorical imperative to overthrow all conditions in which man is a degraded, enslaved, neglected, contemptible being.²

It seems obvious to the author that not only does man need to be changed, but society needs to be changed also. The whole Christian gospel would become illusory and deceptive if it were not concerned with the elemental conflicts which thrust upon contemporary man the necessity of reordering human society. We cannot understand God's action if there is an effort to flee from concrete, earthly, social responsibility. The Faith at Work movement often gives the impression that God can be known personally or mystically; but dealing with the unjust social order is man's work and not God's work. This is serious heresy. We need to look at the new Christian humanists who believe that language about God should be linked to concrete happenings within the social process. The Marxists speak of the mystification of experience. 'Mystification in this concept means obscuring man's rigorous clear-headed perception of his material situation by resort to the vague and misleading expression of religious existence.'³

At times the Faith at Work movement hints that the Christian should

²Karl Marx, The Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society, ed. by L. D. Easton and K. H. Guddat (Garden City: Doubleday, 1967), p. 259.

³Thomas W. Ogletree, paper given at the Institute of Theological Studies, Oxford, England, July, 1969.

be "in the world, but be not of the world", which is different from what Jesus meant.⁴ Faith at Work seems to be saying at times, that much of the world is corrupt; therefore, we must find a fellowship that does not have that taint of corruption. This is unrealistic, for it is within this concrete worldly existence with its conflicts, its burdens, and its terrors (along with its possibilities) that man must find fulfillment. The people of God are not to be withdrawn from this kind of existence. They should be very much a part of it.

The idea of conversion is presented as a conversion away from the world, rather than a commitment to the world. For instance, one of the great problems we are facing is the struggle of blacks and other minority groups for dignity and self-determination. The Faith at Work movement does not take this as seriously as it should. Certainly, one of the ways God is showing himself to the world is in the struggle of the blacks and the Third World for a place of dignity and a sharing of the world's goods. If being in "the middle" means not saying anything about serious controversial issues, it is a price too high to pay. If it is believed that speaking about white racism would antagonize people, and therefore it should not be mentioned, the Gospel has been prostituted. The fact that the social radicals do not seem to find a home in the Faith

⁴Luke 6:22; John 15:19; 12:14; I John 4,5.

at Work movement indicates that the adherence to the "middle of the road" has rendered its social dimension innocuous. If Jesus is interpreted as only a purely spiritual creature who speaks about an other-worldly kingdom, and an inward transformation of life without some special consequences, the manner of his death cannot be understood.

A "church" that is not participating in the world mission may be a useful organization in a community, with helpful teachings and social advantages. But to belong to such a local association does not make one a member of the ecclesia, the community of the New Covenant, the body of Christ, concerning which we read in the New Testament. A church without participation in the world mission is a contradiction in terms. To be a church is to be an instrument of God in the world mission as well as to be a fruit of that mission.⁵

When the Faith at Work movement speaks of love that comes through openness and vulnerability, what is the expression of this love? Is it only in personal terms? If the Christian is to love his neighbor, he must understand that the political, economic, and social structure deeply affects his neighbor.⁶ If the neighbor is crushed by racial discrimination or political tyranny or economic injustice, the Christian's love

⁵L. Harold DeWolf, The Case For Theology in Liberal Perspective (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1959), p. 183.

⁶Walden Howard, "The Challenge of the Bicentennial", Faith at Work, Vol. XXXIX (February 1976). To be fair in his critique of the Faith at Work movement, the author does not wish to leave the impression that there is no social dimension to its program. In this interview with William Sloan Coffin, Jr. (and others) Sloan brought out some very pertinent issues. Some of the issues bordered on the radical social gospel, indicating courage on the part of the editors to raise these issues even when they are not subscribed to by most of the Faith at Work people.

cannot allow him to pass on the other side. This emphasis on the personal, without due consideration of the social, is a great weakness of the Faith at Work movement.

The positive contributions of the Faith at Work movement must be examined. The idea of a lay apostolate is long overdue and much needed in the Protestant Church. Only a half-hearted salute is given to the priesthood of all believers in most established Protestant churches. It could be well documented that the renewal of the church centers in the renewal of the laity. When the church becomes more bureaucratic, when it depends mostly upon episcopal leadership, there is a loss of vitality.

The United Methodist Church is at the place where, if it does not become more congregational in its policy, it, too, will suffer. By "congregational" is meant that lay people have more to say about policies and ministerial leadership, and are made to feel that their decisions register in a very significant way. The power of the Bishop and the Cabinets should weaken; the power of the congregation should grow stronger. For too long the Bishops have become excited about different projects, and they have come forth with statements and concerns, expecting this will lead the church in the proper directions. This has had very little influence. It is a "filtering-from-the-top" process. When there is a real lay apostolate movement, it means that every lay person feels of great significance in the church's mission. Perhaps this is one reason why the Faith at Work movement has not found as easy acceptance among

Methodist circles.

Perhaps a strong lay apostolate would threaten ministerial and episcopal leadership too much. Perhaps we really do not want to put the church in the hands of lay people. Too many times it is felt that only the "professionals" can really administer the grace of God to others. The author is not altogether convinced that the Faith at Work movement really is in the hands of lay people. In this project, the sources referred to by the author are clergy-based. The clergymen may be lay-oriented, but they are still clergymen. The question "are there bona fide laymen running the show?" should be asked.

But the lay apostolate movement means getting back to the priesthood of all believers, where everyone can be Christ to his brother, and Christians can be priests, one to the other. The Faith at Work movement would make a great contribution to the established churches if its concept of the priesthood of all believers would find deep rootage in the life of the church.

The Protestant is thus led to insist on the priesthood of all believers; that is, the grace of God is not channeled through any particular group of ordained men but is open to all.⁷

Hordern goes on to say that if there is any period in which the church is not close to this idea, then God must work through a purely secular

⁷William Hordern, A Layman's Guide to Protestant Theology (New York: Macmillan, 1961), p. 174.

movement. Therefore it is not the duty of Protestantism to condemn secularism if this happens, but to stimulate the secularist to look more deeply into "the awareness of the theonomous nature of their thought and life."⁸

In the interview with Dr. Ogilvie, he pointed out:

One of the weaknesses in the lay apostolate concept is that it is sometimes difficult for them to reproduce themselves. The greatest problem is in the second level when, after there has been training, they find it difficult to carry out the program as enthusiastically as when there was some strong leadership in the initial phase of their own training.⁹

He is saying that the lay apostolate is not anti-clergy, for trained leadership has a significant role in the movement. He points out the weakness which exists when there are not adequately trained lay people. The ministerial leadership will see their role in a different way if they follow the lay apostolate idea. They will see the necessity of being facilitators, rather than leaders who have people following them.

In Chapter VII, theological systems were evaluated. Over-simplification of the theological statements of the Faith at Work movement were a subject of criticism. There is, also, a positive side in not being a theological movement. It is true that the average layman is not interested in the whole theological spectrum. He wants to be a Christian, not a theologian. The movement is correct in assuming that

⁸loc. cit., p. 174.

⁹Ogilvie.

men and women desperately need to find ways in which they can live through another week. They need some concepts that they can understand easily and clearly.

The Faith at Work movement does not appeal to the sophisticate and the intellectual. It does not feel that this is where most people are. The author feels they are correct in this appraisal. They have extrapolated from their theological presuppositions some simple statements that are unforgettable. These statements have handles which people can grasp. Bruce Larson said that there is a difference between simplicity and over-simplification. At times their simplicity is a strength. Here is an excerpt from the interview with Dr. Ogilvie:

McClain:

You mentioned theological roots. It is difficult for me to understand the basic roots of the Faith at Work movement as far as any system is concerned.

Ogilvie:

Well, the relational theology which came out of the Faith at Work movement, is basically the conviction that the Scriptures declared four essential relationships. The key passages of Scripture in the Old and New Testaments declare these four relationships. The Ten Commandments is basically a relational statement of the relationship with God, ourselves, others, and the world. And Jesus' Sermon on the Mount is fundamentally a relational message. His teachings on the Kingdom of God within, in the midst, between us, and coming in society, is relational. And the writings of Paul are profoundly relational. In the culmination of Scripture, Revelation declares the essential relationship with God, with ourselves, and with others.

McClain:

Would you enumerate those four concepts of relational theology?

Ogilvie:

Yes; with God rooted in grace,
 With ourselves expressed in acceptance,
 With others, significant others, of our lives, expressed in
 affirmation,
 And with the world, expressed in involvement.

The layman can grasp this relational theology quickly; and it can be effective in giving power for life changing. Continuing the interview:

McClain:

But the Faith at Work movement hardly falls into any solid camps. There is a little bit of some of the modern orthodoxy, some of the orthodoxy, some strains of liberalism, observing that man can do a lot for himself and he can receive God's grace. They seem to draw from all these schools, and it seems to me that they are able to operate under different kinds of theological systems without having great conflict.

Ogilvie:

I think the reason for that is that it is a movement with an emphasis. It's not a system to be imposed upon American society or on the church. There is an emphasis on conversion and the surrendered life, or the infilling of the Holy Spirit, and the living-present Christ. The released life in Christ's guidance and direction, and the capacity of each Christian to reproduce himself in the lives of other people by the power of God. That emphasis, with conferences to strengthen people in that, and get them started in it, and help them discover how to live together in small clusters of churches in miniature--that emphasis has drawn people from the broad spectrum of fundamentalism to the charismatic movement.

McClain:

It doesn't have any theological sophistication, it seems to me.

Ogilvie:

No.

So we see again that the Faith at Work movement operates as an evangel within the institution of the church and within many theological concepts. Ogilvie pointed out the key to understanding the move-

ment. It is not a theological movement--it is an emphasis on certain theological statements. It extrapolates from the doctrines, truths that are functional and can serve, help, and be useful to the layman who has no background in religion. This is a positive aspect of the movement. It is necessary to remember that it is an emphasis and not a system in order to understand the task of the Faith at Work movement.

Continuing the interview:

McClain:

You have mentioned relational theology. Let me ask you if, in light of what you said, you think that Trueblood is right in his concern that the movement has elements of superficiality? I think his words were "lacked intellectual depth." How do you evaluate his criticism?

Ogilvie:

Well, if his criticism be reflected in the direction that Keith Miller and Bruce Larson and I would be taking in our ministries, in the sense that we have to help people get started, he is right. We also have to help them grow. That's the reason the Festivals of Hope moved into deeper water, and helped people go deeper, and the reason that in our writings and in our recent leadership and discussion guides, we've tried to help people go much deeper.

Trueblood needs to bring into focus the fact that what he is criticizing is unnecessary emphasis for people who maybe already have their heads straight, but who have not been set free to love, and care, and to discover their ministry and help other people. Their ministry becomes one to the uninitiated and the uninformed, and another to churchmen. Then some very basic teachings and the opening of the intellectual and the emotional is going to have to go together.

Ogilvie is saying that the Faith at Work movement is in constant transition. It moves back and forth from renewal within the church to the uninitiated people who have never had any religious background. In

bringing these two kinds of people together, it is necessary to use some strategy. What is obviously postponed (as previously stated) is theological sophistication. Part of the genius of the movement is the way it moves with an evangelical warmth, with tools for personal help, underneath various theological systems and within various denominations. There have been very few movements that have been able to do this as effectively. This is a great strength of the movement.

One of the major emphases of the Faith at Work movement is the insistence that healing comes only through being vulnerable. This raises many questions. To what degree of vulnerability is one capable? It is like putting a person on a treadmill machine and finding what his toleration point is. One of the dangers inherent in the use of vulnerability is that one is never sure of the toleration point of any one person. In the groups conducted at First United Methodist Church, San Diego, it was discovered that there was considerable variation among individuals. Insisting on the same level of vulnerability could be damaging to some persons. Both Larson and Miller have said that there has to be some period of time before one is capable of reaching a certain stage of vulnerability, and that perhaps some cannot go as far as others.

In the San Diego church group, there was one lady who had come from a wealthy family and had been reared very conservatively, who found it very difficult to open up her private life. In her appraisal of the

group, her one criticism was that she felt there was too much probing into her privacy. She felt that there are some things one does not talk about with other people, and felt incensed when certain subjects were brought out into the open. In counseling with her, the author discovered some of the basis of her need for privacy. Her early conditioning in her family made her look upon privacy as a strength. You didn't share everything; you should be strong enough to take care of problems within yourself. For many years she had practiced this belief. However, since she was suffering severe marital problems, she was beginning to wonder if this style of life was really working. She had two feelings toward the group. She felt helped by other members of the group; but often she felt repulsed, and she resisted as they entered certain areas of life. It was clear in the counseling group experience that some individuals cannot live the vulnerable life to the extent that Miller and Larson write about.

Returning to the interview with Dr. Lloyd Ogilvie:

McClain:

Let me ask you about the attitude toward vulnerability, and this openness and honesty. Is there some risk to this?

Ogilvie:

Yes. I think there is a danger to anything that is dynamic, and I feel that vulnerability is not a manipulative device. It's not a technique of leadership--it's an essential ingredient in a healthy psychological life, and in a mature Christian life.

McClain:

Do you take this vulnerability to the pulpit?

Ogilvie:

I do. However, I believe there is a difference between, (let me

put it this way) a difference between being private and being personal. You can be deeply personal throughout a message without being private in the revelation of your own life. I believe that private sharing should be in a select small group of which you are a part, one that meets weekly. The ones in this group, should know you absolutely and utterly. By personal, I mean that you can be open about your own need to grow, your own failures, your inadequacies, your own discoveries, your own delight in yourself, as you grow as a person. I feel that every message I preach must have in it some time when I eyeball it with the congregation and say, this is what this means to me personally.

McClain:

How do you make the distinction between personal and private in your preaching? I mean, how do you tell which is good taste and which is bad taste?

Ogilvie:

Well, often the specifics of a personal sharing which deal with the private are not necessary to make your point. For example, the intimacies of marriage, the privacy of the family, the memories of the past which, if shared in great detail, would hurt other people. I always feel it's not my task to confess anyone else's sins, and sometimes vulnerability and honesty is misunderstood as "my" right to tell what other people did or did not do to me.

Let me give you an example. In my own relationship with my sons, I've learned a great deal. One boy is an extension of my ego, and one is a very different kind of boy. I'm learning how to love each one in a particular way that's meaningful and satisfying in his own language. One's athletic; the other is artistic. One loves to do things I like to do; the other, well, I have to search for things we can do together. Now I've shared something that's personal with you. I have not gone into intimate detail of either boy's psyche, and yet if I were to share that story with the congregation, there would be immediate response of understanding that I was facing difficulties just like they were.

I just passed through eight months of my wife having very serious cancer. She had eight different surgeries, and you know, radiation and the whole bit, but I have, as I passed through that, made reference to the fact that I've really discovered what it means to trust God with raw faith. But I haven't gone into details of it.

McClain:

You can hint about your hurts. You can tell them about your pain.

Ogilvie:

Right.

McClain:

You know, I think that Miller sometimes gets into the area of the private when he talks about his marriage relations.

Ogilvie:

I've not felt that. I've not been with him too much, but I've heard people say that.

McClain:

What I am saying is, there must be a distinction of where you can be vulnerable and personal in the pulpit, without doing it in bad taste, which would mean to me, revealing some privacies which you shouldn't. I have felt that Miller, at times, got into private areas of his life.

Ogilvie:

I feel that as Christian leaders, the thing that people need us to be vulnerable about, is our need to grow, that we don't have it made, the fact that we've failed, that we don't always do everything right, that we get impatient, we get tired, we need the Holy Spirit. The more open we can be with people about the fact that we are on a pilgrimage and we're growing in the midst of it, then we can point to the fact that we've had to make a new surrender of our lives in a particular area during the past week.

McClain:

Which puts us all in the same boat.

Ogilvie:

That's right. Without going into all the details of it.

McClain:

I think that's what great preaching is--when there is the feeling that we're all in the same boat.

How wide a reach will the Faith at Work movement have? It's appeal has been mostly within the institution of the church, although it

reaches many unchurched people. When it reaches the unchurched people, it brings them into a religious orientation. While Miller and Larson talk about language that is contemporary and free from some of the traditional concepts, they do not speak of the secular language satisfactory to the humanist.

Faith at Work is a religious movement. It speaks of conversion; and conversion in traditional concepts usually means that a person is turned from sin to righteousness, from doubt to faith, from the world to God. This interpretation limits the influence of the Faith at Work movement. It cannot speak, in any genuine sense, the language of the secular world.

In the movement, conversion means that a person surrenders and commits his life to the faith (i.e., the four points of relational theology--the will of God is found in Jesus Christ, etc.). There is little talk about affirming the secular man where he is. There is no acknowledgement that perhaps he is already a disciple of the Lord, although there is no theoretical recognition through any formal commitment or any language that he uses. The Faith at Work movement would not acknowledge that there is a sectarian form of faith which is an ad hoc expression of Christian experience.

The author believes that when any person makes a valid response to special conditions and needs of society, God is at work there. To assume that a person has to bring all of this over into traditional re-

ligious concepts is a self-righteousness that is intolerable. There are many instances in human history in which the principle agents of God's activity have been persons and groups other than his self-acknowledged servants. The Faith at Work movement needs to affirm that Christ is already at work in the world and in people's lives, and that to speak of conversion to them would smack of arrogance. The author realizes that this is some of his "natural theology" that is beginning to show. In his study of the Faith at Work movement, he has come to understand his own theology better. Perhaps the Faith at Work movement needs the humility to say that other disciplines are in serious search of truth and reality and God, although their efforts are not expressed in any religious forms. Paul Tillich says, "...the presence of the holy that is a non-religious conversation." He continues:

I often told my scientist friends that they follow strictly the principle formulated classically by Thomas Aquinas, the great medieval theologian: 'If you know something, then you know something about God.' And I would agree with this statement, and therefore these men also have an experience of what I like to call the vertical line down, and perhaps also up, although what they do in splitting atoms is discovering and managing finite relations to each other.¹⁰

The Faith at Work movement should be careful that it does not try to domesticate God within certain categories. This thought was explored with Dr. Ogilvie in the interview:

¹⁰ Dialogue between Paul Tillich and Carl Rogers, San Diego State University, 1966, p. 2.

McClain:

The criticism that I had was that most of the Faith at Work appeal was assuming that God only spoke in our usual understanding in traditional ways.

Ogilvie:

No.

McClain:

It seems to me that somewhere there are people out there that God speaks to in very non-traditional ways through events and common experiences that are not usually associated as religious and I was looking for this kind of approach, too. But we always seem to bring it into certain kinds of boundaries. But man out there is saying, 'Yes, I experienced God but it was not within the boundaries we usually think of as Christian or traditional.' This is where some of my natural theology comes out.

Ogilvie:

Yes.

McClain:

I had a feeling that the Faith at Work movement picks up a little bit of natural theology, but basically it would not accept that man and God can be confronted without the Scriptures, or without the person of Jesus Christ, that man can confront in other events.

Ogilvie:

I think they would resist that. However, they might affirm that as pre-evangelism of God's encounter with man in the events of the natural world, in circumstances, and in problems, as well as opportunity itself, bringing him to the place where he would ask the question, 'Who is this God who is dealing with my life?' And then help a person to discover this God in and through Jesus Christ.

McClain:

I see this as a problem of communication with a lot of other disciplines who are in search of truth, in search of reality, and which some people call God. If you try to say, 'we don't affirm what you're doing as God-searching,' I see it as . . .

Ogilvie:

Right. My feeling is that we ought to affirm the longing hunger

of people, and the many different ways that they are searching for the reality of God, but that we ought to remain very clear in our description of who God is. And he is through Jesus Christ, and how you know him through the plan of salvation, and what the Scriptures mean as the source of authority and the direction in the Christian life.

McClain:

So you would question Tillich's idea that as long as the scientist says, "I know there is something there; maybe I don't understand it, but there's a mystery," that he is encountering God?

Ogilvie:

Oh, I believe that he has an encounter with God, but we have grossly neglected him if we don't come alongside and help him discover who this God is that he's encountered.

McClain:

Then you feel you should always bring it back into traditional terms.

Ogilvie:

I resist the word "traditional."

McClain:

All right.

Ogilvie:

I'd say that we must find new ways to make the Gospel clear, and that can be done in lots of contemporary expressions and idioms, but I feel there is only one essential, basic way to know who this God is who is impinging on our lives in so many wonderful ways.

McClain:

And that is through Jesus Christ.

Ogilvie:

Yes.

It is clear that the Faith at Work movement finds itself within the more orthodox boundaries, and therefore would be limited in dealing with the secular mind of our day. Ogilvie said the Faith at Work

movement would resist acknowledgement as sufficient for faith. The final commitment must come through Jesus Christ.

What about the future of the Faith at Work movement? It has a long future working within the institutional church, and will have a tremendous influence far beyond the church life. Many leaders within the church are finding that using the movement's material brings a personal warmth and depth that is very much needed. The Faith at Work movement is reading correctly most of the people in the pew, who want their religion to be warm and personal. The average lay person is struggling desperately, not just with the pressure of the outside world but with internal problems of guilt, meaninglessness, anxiety. The movement speaks their kind of language. To offer a person who is desperate some relief, some hope, some freedom, will always bring out a response. This dimension is needed in the established churches. There is a crying need for this emphasis.

In no way is the Faith at Work movement trying to find a substitute for the church. It is trying to say, "This is what the church should have been doing all along. It should be providing this very personal warmth." It is an emphasis and not a new theology or a new method. Within the United Methodist Church, of which the author is a part, it has a great contribution to make in bringing to life those who have not responded to the formal ways of worship.

In the interview with Dr. Ogilvie, the author asked about the

future leadership of the Faith at Work movement, since Keith Miller, Bruce Larson, and Lloyd Ogilvie have left active involvement in the movement:

McClain:

Do you think the movement can suffer the loss of Larson and Miller, and people like yourself, or even Trueblood, who was getting a little disenchanted with it? Do you think it can carry on without this kind of strong leadership?

Ogilvie:

Well, I think that probably one of the greatest men of our time who is needed to be recognized and affirmed is Ralph Osborne. And I think that the movement needs to recognize his very special gift for our time, and give him the freedom to gather around him people in whom he can reproduce the quality of life that he is seeking to live. Ralph is probably one of the most brilliant of the whole group of people who were in the movement. He has great gifts of leadership. I would hope that the desire to ameliorate any kind of pivotal leader, would not deny the unique and special gifts Ralph has for people to identify with and say, 'Now that's the kind of life I want to live.'

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